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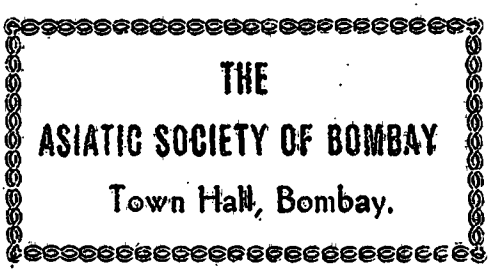

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SERMONS,

PREACHED AT

TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON.

Sincerely & gratefully yours
Fred W. Robertson

SERMONS,

PREACHED AT

TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON,

BY THE LATE

REV. FREDERICK W. ROBERTSON, M.A.,

THE INCUMBENT.

68208

First Series.

TENTH EDITION.

LONDON:

SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

M.DCCC.LXIII.

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TO

THE CONGREGATION

WORSHIPPING IN

TRINITY CHAPEL, BRIGHTON,

FROM AUGUST 15, 1847, TO AUGUST 15, 1853.

THESE

RECOLLECTIONS OF SERMONS

PREACHED BY THEIR LATE PASTOR

ARE DEDICATED.

PREFACE

TO THE TENTH EDITION.

In publishing these Sermons a few words of explanation are necessary.

They are not notes previously prepared, nor are they Sermons written before delivery. They are simply "Recollections:" sometimes dictated by the Preacher himself to the younger members of a family in which he was interested, at their urgent entreaty; sometimes written out by himself for them when they were at a distance and unable to attend his ministry.*

They have been carefully preserved, and are now published without corrections or additions, just as they were found. Mr. Robertson attached no value whatever to them, and never gave any directions concerning

* A reference to a paragraph in his own preface to "The Israelite's Grave" (page 344) explains this.

them. The only Sermon which saw the light in his lifetime is now republished in this volume, with his own preface, explaining how it was preserved, and that it was printed by desire of his congregation.

Unfortunately, in some instances this Series is incomplete. The fourth of the Advent Lectures* was never written out, owing to his uncertain and suffering state of health; and this cause, combined with his remarkable dislike to recalling his discourses —a peculiarity known to all who were intimately acquainted with him—has made these recollections more broken and imperfect than they would otherwise have been.

It may not be inappropriate to mention that a second and third series of Mr. Robertson's Sermons, and also a Volume containing his Lectures and Addresses on Literary and Social topics, have been published, while a fourth and concluding volume of his Brighton Sermons is now passing through the press.

The Expository Lectures on the Epistle to the Corinthians have been published, and have reached a

* The fourth and last Advent Lecture was "The Jewish;" on the text, "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."—John i. 11.

second edition. There is also now in the press a volume printed from the notes used by Mr. Robertson in the pulpit, containing in some cases only the heads of his subject, and in other cases full notes on each topic treated of therein. This, it is hoped, will be speedily published.

It is not necessary to say one word in this place of the character of Mr. Robertson's teaching; it is best illustrated in the published volumes of his Sermons: and yet it seems needful to say, that even these suggest but a very faint idea of the influence that teaching exercised on all who came within its sphere.

November 26, 1862.

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ROM. i. 14-16.—"*I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*" 197

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SERMONS.

I.

Preached April 29, 1849.

GOD'S REVELATION OF HEAVEN.

1. Cor. ii. 9, 10.—"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit."

The preaching of the Apostle Paul was rejected by numbers in the cultivated town of Corinth. It was not wise enough, nor eloquent enough, nor was it sustained by miracles. The man of taste found it barbarous: the Jew missed the signs and wonders which he looked for in a new dispensation: and the rhetorician missed the convincing arguments of the schools. To all which the Apostle was content to reply, that his judges were incompetent to try the question. The princes of this world might judge in a matter of politics: the leaders in the world of literature were qualified to pronounce on

a point of taste: the counsellors of this world to weigh an amount of evidence. But in matters spiritual, they were as unfit to judge as a man without ear is to decide respecting harmony; or a man judging alone by sensation, to supersede the higher truth of science by an appeal to his own estimate of appearances. The world, to sense, seems stationary. To the eye of Reason it moves with lightning speed; and the cultivation of reason alone can qualify for an opinion on the matter. The judgment of the senses is worth nothing in such matters. For every kind of truth a special capacity or preparation is indispensable.

For a revelation of spiritual facts two things are needed:—First, a Divine Truth; next, a spirit which can receive it.

Therefore the Apostle's whole defence resolved itself into this: The natural man receiveth not the things which are of the Spirit of God. The world by wisdom knew not God. And his vindication of his teaching was —These Revealed Truths cannot be seen by the eye, heard by the ear, nor guessed by the heart: they are visible, audible, imaginable only to the spirit. By the spiritually prepared, they are recognised as beautiful, though they be folly to all the world beside,—as his Master had said before him, "Wisdom is justified by her children." In whatever type of life she might be exhibited, whether in the austere Man of the Desert, or in the higher type of the social life of Christ, the Children of Wisdom recognised her lineaments, justified and loved her—She was felt by *them*.

Two things are contained in this verse:—

I. The inability of the lower parts of human nature —the natural man—to apprehend the higher truths.

II. The Nature and laws of revelation.

I. By the natural man is meant the lower faculties of man; and it is said of these that they cannot discover truth spiritual.

1. Eternal truth is not perceived through sensation. "Eye hath not seen the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

There is a life of mere sensation. The degree of its enjoyment depends upon fineness of organization. The pleasures of sense arise from the vibration of a nerve, or the thrilling of a muscle—nothing higher.

The highest pleasure of sensation comes through the eye. She ranks above all the rest of the senses in dignity. He whose eye is so refined by discipline that he can repose with pleasure upon the serene outline of beautiful form, has reached the purest of the sensational raptures.

Now the Corinthians could appreciate this. Theirs was the land of Beauty. They read the Apostle's letter, surrounded by the purest conceptions of Art. In the orders of architecture, the most richly graceful of all columnar forms receives its name from Corinth. And yet it was to these men, living in the very midst of the chastely beautiful, upon whom the Apostle emphatically urged,—"*Eye* hath not seen the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

Let us not depreciate what God has given. There is a rapture in gazing on this wondrous world. There is a joy in contemplating the manifold Forms in which the All Beautiful has concealed His essence,—the Living Garment in which the Invisible has robed His mysterious loveliness. In every aspect of Nature there is joy; whether it be the purity of virgin morning, or the sombre gray of a day of clouds, or the solemn pomp and majesty of night; whether it be the chaste lines of the crystal, or the waving outline of distant hills, tremulously visible through dim vapours; the minute petals of the fringed daisy, or the overhanging form of mysterious forests. It is a pure delight *to see.*

But all this is bounded. The eye can only reach the finite Beautiful. It does not scan "the King in his beauty, nor the land that is very far off." The Kingdom, but not the King—something measured by inches, yards, and miles—not the land which is very far off in the Infinite.

Again, it is perishable beauty,—a sight to sadden rather than delight. Even while you gaze, and feel how fair it is, joy mingles with melancholy, from a consciousness that it all is fading:—it is the transient —not the Eternal Loveliness for which our spirits pant.

Therefore, when He came into this world, who was the Truth and the Life, in the body which God had prepared for Him, He came not in the glory of form: He was "a root out of a dry ground: He had no form nor comeliness; when they saw Him, there was no beauty

that they should desire Him." The eye did not behold, even in Christ, the things which God had prepared.

Now observe, this is an Eternal Truth; true at all times—true now and for ever. In the quotation of this verse, a false impression is often evident. It is quoted as if the Apostle by "the things prepared" meant heaven, and the glories of a world which is to be visible hereafter, but is at present unseen. This is manifestly alien from his purpose. The world of which he speaks is not a future, but a present revelation. God *hath* revealed it. He speaks not of something to be manifested hereafter, but of something already shown, only not to eye nor ear. The distinction lies between a kingdom which is appreciable by the senses, and another whose facts and truths are seen and heard only by the spirit. Never yet hath the eye seen the Truths of God—but then never shall it see them. In Heaven this shall be as true as now. Shape and colour give them not. God will never be visible—nor will His blessedness. He has no form. The pure in heart will see Him, but never with the eye; only in the same way, but in a different degree, that they see him now. In the anticipated Vision of the Eternal, what do you expect to see? A shape? Hues? You will never behold God. Eye hath not seen, and never shall see in finite form, the Infinite One, nor the Infinite of feeling or of Truth.

Again—no scientific analysis can discover the Truths of God. Science cannot give a Revelation. Science proceeds upon observation. It submits everything to

the experience of the senses. Its law, expounded by its great lawgiver, is, that if you would ascertain its truth you must see, feel, taste. Experiment is the test of truth. Now, you cannot, by searching, find out the Almighty to perfection, nor a single one of the blessed Truths He has to communicate.

Men have tried to demonstrate Eternal Life, from an examination of the structure of the body. One fancies he has discovered the seat of life in the pineal gland—another in the convolution of a nerve—and thence each infers the continuance of the mystic principle supposed to be discovered there. But a third comes, and sees in it all nothing really immaterial: organization, cerebration, but not Thought or Mind separable from these; nothing that must necessarily subsist after the organism has been destroyed.

Men have supposed they discovered the law of Deity written on the anatomical phenomena of disease. They have exhibited the brain inflamed by intoxication, and the structure obliterated by excess. They have shown in the disordered frame the inevitable penalty of transgression. But if a man, startled by all this, gives up his sin, has he from this selfish prudence learned the law of Duty? The penalties of wrong-doing, doubtless: but not the sanction of Right and Wrong written on the conscience, of which penalties are only the enforcements. He has indisputable evidence that it is expedient not to commit excesses: but you cannot manufacture a conscience out of expediency: the voice of conscience says not, It is better not to do so; but "Thou shalt not."

No: it it is vain that we ransack the world for probable evidences of God, and hypotheses of his existence. It is idle to look into the materialism of man for the Revelation of his immortality; or to examine the morbid anatomy of the body to find the rule of Right. If a man go to the eternal world with convictions of Eternity, the Resurrection, God, already in his spirit, he will find abundant corroborations of that which he already believes. But if God's existence be not thrilling every fibre of his heart, if the Immortal be not already in him as the proof of the Resurrection, if the law of Duty be not stamped upon his soul as an Eternal Truth, unquestionable, a thing that must be obeyed, quite separately from all considerations of punishment or impunity, science will never reveal these—observation pries in vain—the physician comes away from the laboratory an infidel. Eye hath not seen the truths which are clear enough to Love and to the Spirit.

2. Eternal truth is not reached by hearsay—"Ear hath not heard the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

No revelation can be adequately given by the address of man to man, whether by writing or orally, even if he be put in possession of the Truth itself. For all such revelation must be made through words: and words are but counters—the coins of intellectual exchange. There is as little resemblance between the silver coin and the bread it purchases, as between the word and the thing it stands for. Looking at the coin, the form of the loaf does not suggest itself. Listening to the

word, you do not perceive the idea for which it stands, unless you are already in possession of it. Speak of ice to an inhabitant of the torrid zone, the word does not give him an idea, or if it does, it must be a false one. Talk of blueness to one who cannot distinguish colours, what can your most eloquent description present to him resembling the truth of your sensation? Similarly in matters spiritual, no verbal revelation can give a single simple idea. For instance, what means justice to the unjust—or purity to the man whose heart is steeped in licentiousness? What does infinitude mean to a being who has never stirred from infancy beyond a cell, never seen the sky, or the sea, or any of those *occasions* of thought which, leaving vagueness on the mind, suggest the idea of the illimitable? It means, explain it as you will, nothing to him but a room: vastly larger than his own, but still a room, terminated by a wall. Talk of God to a thousand ears, each has his own different conception. Each man in this congregation has a God before him at this moment, who is, according to his own attainment in goodness, more or less limited and imperfect. The sensual man hears of God, and understands one thing. The pure man hears, and conceives another thing. Whether you speak in metaphysical or metaphorical language, in the purest words of inspiration, or the grossest images of materialism, the conceptions conveyed by the same word are essentially different, according to the soul which receives.

So that apostles themselves, and prophets speaking to

the ear, cannot reveal truth to the soul—no, not if God Himself were to touch their lips with fire. A verbal revelation is only a revelation to the ear.

Now see what a hearsay religion is. There are men who believe on authority. Their minister believes all this Christianity true: therefore so do they. He calls this doctrine essential: they echo it. Some thousands of years ago, men communed with God: they have heard this, and are content it should be so. They have heard with the hearing of the ear, that God is Love—that the ways of holiness are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace. But a hearsay belief saves not. The Corinthian philosophers heard Paul — Pharisees heard Christ. How much did the ear convey? To thousands exactly nothing. He alone believes truth who feels it. He has a religion whose soul knows by experience that to serve God and know Him is the richest treasure. And unless Truth come to you, not in word only, but in power besides—authoritative because true, not true because authoritative—there has been no real revelation made to you from God.

3. Truth is not discoverable by the heart—"neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."

The heart—two things we refer to this source: the power of imagining, and the power of loving.

Imagination is distinct from the mere dry faculty of reasoning. Imagination is creative—it is an immediate intuition; not a logical analysis—we call it popularly a kind of inspiration. Now imagination is a power of

the heart:—Great thoughts originate from a large heart:—a man must have a heart, or he never could create.

It is a grand thing, when in the stillness of the soul, thought bursts into flame, and the intuitive vision comes like an inspiration; when breathing thoughts clothe themselves in burning words, winged as it were with lightning—or when a great law of the universe reveals itself to the mind of Genius, and where all was darkness, his single word bids Light be, and all is Order where chaos and confusion were. Or when the truths of human nature shape themselves forth in the creative fancies of one like the million-minded Poet, and you recognise the rare power of *heart* which sympathizes with, and can reproduce all that is found in man.

But all this is nothing more than what the material man can achieve. The most ethereal creations of fantastic fancy were shaped by a mind that could read the life of Christ, and then blaspheme the Adorable. The truest utterances, and some of the deepest ever spoken, revealing the unrest and the agony that lie hid in the heart of man, came from one whose life was from first to last selfish. The highest astronomer of this age, before whose clear eye Creation lay revealed in all its perfect order, was one whose spirit refused to recognise the Cause of Causes. The mighty heart of genius had failed to reach the things which God imparts to a humble spirit.

There is more in the heart of man—it has the power of affection. The highest moment known on earth by

the merely natural, is that in which the mysterious union of heart with heart is felt. Call it friendship—love—what you will, that mystic blending of two souls in one, when self is lost and found again in the being of another, when, as it were, moving about in the darkness and loneliness of existence, we suddenly come in contact with something, and we find that spirit has touched spirit. This is the purest, serenest ecstasy of the merely human—more blessed than any sight that can be presented to the eye, or any sound that can be given to the ear: more sublime than the sublimest dream ever conceived by genius in its most gifted hour, when the freest way was given to the shaping spirit of imagination.

This has entered into the heart of man, yet this is of the lower still. It attains not to the things prepared by God—it dimly shadows them. Human love is but the faint type of that surpassing blessedness which belongs to those who love God.

II. We pass therefore to the Nature and Laws of Revelation.

First, Revelation is made by a Spirit to a spirit—"God hath revealed them to us by His Spirit." Christ is the voice of God *without* the man—the Spirit is the voice of God *within* the man. The highest Revelation is not made by Christ, but comes directly from the universal Mind to our minds. Therefore, Christ said Himself, "He, the Spirit, shall take of mine and shall show it unto you." And therefore it is written here—

"The *Spirit* searches all things, yea the deep things of God."

Now the Spirit of God lies touching, as it were, the soul of man—ever around and near. On the outside of earth, man stands with the boundless heaven above him: nothing between him and space—space around him and above him—the confines of the sky touching him. So is the spirit of man to the Spirit of the Ever Near. They mingle. In every man this is true. The spiritual in him, by which he might become a recipient of God, may be dulled, deadened, by a life of sense, but in this world never lost. All men are not spiritual men; but all have spiritual sensibilities which might awake. All that is wanted is to become conscious of the nearness of God. God has placed men here to feel after Him if haply they might find Him, albeit *He be not far* from any one of them. Our souls float in the immeasurable ocean of Spirit. God lies around us: at any moment we might be conscious of the contact.

The *condition* upon which this Self-Revelation of the Spirit is made to man, is Love. These things are "prepared for them that love Him," or, which is the same thing, revealed to those who have the mind of Christ.

Let us look into this word Love. Love to man may mean several things. It may mean love to his person, which is very different from himself—or it may mean simply pity. Love to God can only mean one thing: God is a Character. To love God is to love His character. For instance—God is Purity. And to be

pure in thought and look; to turn away from unhallowed books and conversation, to abhor the moments in which we have not been pure, is to love God.

God is Love—and to love men till private attachments have expanded into a philanthropy which embraces all—at last even the evil and enemies, with compassion—that is to love God. God is Truth. To be true—to hate every form of falsehood—to live a brave—true—real life—that is to love God. God is Infinite—and to love the boundless, reaching on from grace to grace, adding charity to faith, and rising upwards ever to see the Ideal still above us, and to die with it unattained, aiming insatiably to be perfect even as the Father is perfect—that is love to God.

This Love is manifested in obedience—Love is the life of which obedience is the form. "He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. . . . He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Now here can be no mistake. Nothing can be Love to God which does not shape itself into obedience. We remember the anecdote of the Roman commander who forbade an engagement with the enemy, and the first transgressor against whose prohibition was his own son. He accepted the challenge of the leader of the other host, met, slew, spoiled him, and then in triumphant feeling carried the spoils to his father's tent. But the Roman father refused to recognise the instinct which prompted this as deserving of the name of Love—Disobedience contradicted it, and deserved death:—weak sentiment, what was it worth?

So with God:—strong feelings, warm expressions, varied internal experience co-existing with disobedience, God counts not as Love. Mere weak feeling may not usurp that sacred name.

To this Love, adoring and obedient, God reveals His Truth—For such as love it is prepared: or rather, by the well-known Hebrew inversion, such are prepared for it.—Love is the condition without which revelation does not take place. As in the natural, so in the spiritual world:—By compliance with the laws of the universe, we put ourselves in possession of its blessings.—Obey the laws of health and you obtain health:—Temperance, sufficiency of light and air, and exercise, these are the conditions of health. Arm yourselves with the laws of nature, and you may call down the lightning from the sky:—surround yourself with glass, and the lightning may play innocuously a few inches from you—It cannot touch you—you may defy it—you have obeyed the conditions of nature, and nature is on your side against it.

In the same way, there are conditions in the world of Spirit, by compliance with which God's Spirit comes into the soul with all its Revelations, as surely as lightning from the sky, and as invariably:—such conditions as these. "The secret of the Lord is with them that *fear* Him." "No man hath seen God at any time." "If we *love* one another, God dwelleth in us." "With this man will I dwell, even with him that is of a *meek* and *contrite* spirit." "If any man will *do* His will, he shall know of the doctrine"—Reverence, love, meekness, con-

trition, obedience—these conditions having taken place, God enters into the soul, whispers His secret, becomes visible, imparts knowledge and conviction.

Now these laws are universal and invariable:—they are subject to no caprice.—There is no favourite child of nature who may hold the fire-ball in the hollow of his hand and trifle with it without being burnt:—there is no selected Child of Grace who can live an irregular life without unrest; or be proud, and at the same time have peace: or indolent, and receive fresh inspiration: or remain unloving and cold, and yet see and hear and feel the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.

Therefore the apostle preached the Cross to men who felt, and to men who felt not, the Revelation contained in it. The Cross is humbleness: love: self-surrender—These the apostle preached. To conquer the world by loving it—To be blest by ceasing the pursuit of happiness, and sacrificing life instead of finding it—To make a hard lot easy by submitting to it—this was his divine philosophy of life. And the princes of this world, amidst scoffs and laughter, replied, Is that all? Nothing to dazzle—nothing to captivate. But the disciples of the inward life recognised the Divine Truth which this doctrine of the Cross contained. The humble of heart, and the loving, felt that in this lay the mystery of life, of themselves, and of God, all revealed and plain. It was God's own wisdom, felt by those who had the mind of Christ.

The application of all this is very easy: Love God,

and He will dwell with you.—Obey God, and He will reveal the truths of His deepest teaching to your soul. Not *perhaps*:—As surely as the laws of the spiritual world are irreversible, are these things prepared for obedient love:—An inspiration as true, as real, and as certain as that which ever prophet or apostle reached, is yours, if you will.

And if obedience were entire and love were perfect, then would the Revelation of the Spirit to the soul of man be perfect too. There would be trust expelling care, and enabling a man to repose:—there would be a love which would cast out fear:—there would be a sympathy with the mighty All of God:—selfishness would pass, Isolation would be felt no longer;—the tide of the universal and eternal Life would come with mighty pulsations throbbing through the soul. To such a man it would not matter where he was, nor what:—to live or die would be alike. If he lived, he would live unto the Lord; if he died, he would die to the Lord. The bed of down surrounded by friends, or the martyr's stake, girt round with curses—what matter which? Stephen, dragged, hurried, driven, felt the glory of God streaming on his face: when the shades of faintness were gathering round his eyes, and the world was fading away into indistinctness, "the things prepared" were given him. His spirit saw what "eye had never seen." The later martyr bathes his fingers in the flames, and while the flesh shrivels and the bones are cindered, says, in unfeigned sincerity, that he is lying on a bed of roses. It would matter little what he was,—the ruler

of a kingdom, or a tailor grimed with the smoke and dust of a workshop. To a soul filled with God, the difference between these two is inappreciable:—as if, from a distant star, you were to look down upon a palace and a hovel, both dwindled into distance, and were to smile at the thought of calling one large and the other small.

No matter to such a man what he saw or what he heard; for every sight would be resplendent with beauty, and every sound would echo harmony: things common would become transfigured, as when the ecstatic state of the inward soul reflected a radiant cloud from the frame of Christ. The Human would become Divine, Life—even the meanest—noble. In the hue of every violet there would be a glimpse of Divine affection, and a dream of Heaven. The forest would blaze with Deity, as it did to the eye of Moses. The creations of genius would breathe less of earth and more of Heaven. Human love itself would burn with a clearer and intenser flame, rising from the altar of self-sacrifice.

These are "the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Compared with these, what are loveliness,—the eloquent utterances of man,—the conceptions of the heart of Genius? What are they all to the serene stillness of a spirit lost in Love: the full deep rapture of a soul into which the spirit of God is pouring itself in a mighty tide of Revelation?

II.

Preached June 6, 1849.

PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

MATT. xiii. 1—10.—"The same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside. And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, behold a sower went forth to sow: And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth; and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth: And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up and choked them: But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

BEFORE the reception of the Lord's Supper on Sunday next, I have been anxious to address you, my young friends, once more, in order to carry on the thoughts, and, if possible, deepen the impressions of Tuesday last. During the last few weeks, you have been subjected to much that is exciting; and in proportion to the advantage is the danger of that excitement. A great part of the value of the rite of Confirmation consists in its being a season of excitement or impression. The

value of excitement is, that it breaks up the old mechanical life which has become routine. It stirs the stagnancy of our existence, and causes the stream of life to flow more fresh and clear. The danger of excitement is the probability of reaction. The heart, like the body and the mind, cannot be long exposed to extreme tension, without giving way afterwards. Strong impressions are succeeded by corresponding listlessness. Your work, to which you have so long looked forward, is done. The profession has been made; and now, left suddenly, as it were, with nothing before you, and apparently no answer to the question—What are we to do now?—insensibly you will feel that all is over, and the void within your hearts will be inevitably filled, unless there be great vigilance, by a very different class of excitements. This danger will be incurred most by those precisely who felt most deeply the services of the past week.

The parable I have selected dwells upon such a class of dangers.

No one who felt, or even thought, could view the scene of Tuesday last without emotion. Six or seven hundred young persons solemnly pledged themselves to renounce evil in themselves and in the world, and to become disciples of the Cross. The very colour of their garments, typical of purity, seemed to suggest the hope and the expectation that the day might come when they shall be found clothed with that inward righteousness, of which their dress was but a symbol, when "they shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy."

As yet fresh in feeling, as yet untainted by open sin, who could see them without hoping that?

My young friends, experience forces us to correct that sanguine anticipation. Of the seven hundred who were earnest then, it were an appalling question to ask how many will have retained their earnestness six months hence, and how much of all that which seemed so real, will be recognised as pure, true gold, at the last Great Day. Soon some will have lost their innocence—and some will have become frivolous and artificial—and the world will have got its cold deadening hand on some. Who shall dare to guess in how many the best raised hopes will be utterly disappointed?

Now, the question which presents itself is,—How comes so much promise to end in failure? And to this the parable of the sower returns a reply.

Three causes are conceivable: It might be the will—or, if you venture so to call it—the fault of him who gave the Truth: Or it might be some inherent impotency in the Truth itself: Or, lastly, the fault might lie solely in the soil of the heart.

This parable assures us that the fault does not lie in God, the sower. God does not predestinate men to fail. That is strikingly told in the history of Judas—"From a ministry and apostleship Judas fell, that he might go to his own place." The ministry and apostleship were that to which God had destined him. To work out that, was the destiny appointed to him, as truly as to any of the other apostles. He was called, elected to that. But when he refused to execute that mission,

the very circumstances which, by God's decree, were leading him to blessedness, hurried him to ruin. Circumstances prepared by Eternal Love, became the destiny which conducted him to everlasting doom. He was a predestined man—crushed by his Fate. But he went to his "*own* place." He had shaped his own destiny. So the ship is wrecked by the winds and waves—hurried to its fate. But the winds and waves were in truth its best friends. Rightly guided, it would have made use of them to reach the port; wrongly steered, they became the destiny which drove it on the rocks. Failure—the wreck of life, is not to be impiously traced to the Will of God. God will have all men to be saved, and come to a knowledge of the Truth. God willeth not the death of a sinner.

Nor, again, can we find the cause in any impotency of Truth:—an impotency, doubtless, there is somewhere. The old Thinkers accounted for it by the depravity of matter. God can do anything, they said. Being good, God would do all good. If He do not, it is because of the materials He has to deal with. Matter thwarts Him: Spirit is pure, but matter is essentially evil and unspiritual: the body is corrupt. Against this doctrine, St. Paul argues, 2 Cor. v. 4.

The true account is this,—God has created in man a will which has become a cause. "God can do any thing."—I know not that. God cannot deny Himself—God cannot do wrong—God cannot create a number less than one—God cannot make a contradiction true. It is a contradiction to let man be free, and force him

to do right. God has performed this marvel, of creating a Being with free will, independent, so to speak, of Himself—a real cause in His universe. To say that He has created such a one, is to say that He has given him the power to fail. Without free-will there could be no human goodness. It is wise, therefore, and good in God, to give birth to free-will. But once acknowledge free-will in man, and the origin of evil does not lie in God.

And this leads us to the remaining cause of failure which is conceivable. In our own free-will—in the grand and fearful power we have to ruin ourselves—lies the real and only religious solution of the mystery. In the soil of the heart is found all the nutriment of spiritual life, and all the nutriment of the weeds and poisons which destroy spiritual life. And it is this which makes Christian character, when complete, a thing so inestimably precious. There are things precious, not from the materials of which they are made, but from the risk and difficulty of bringing them to perfection. The speculum of the largest telescope foils the optician's skill in casting. Too much or too little heat —the interposition of a grain of sand, a slight alteration in the temperature of the weather, and all goes to pieces —it must be recast. Therefore, when successfully finished, it is a matter for almost the congratulation of a country. Rarer, and more difficult still than the costliest part of the most delicate of instruments, is the completion of Christian character. Only let there come the heat of persecution—or the cold of human

desertion—a little of the world's dust—and the rare and costly thing is cracked, and becomes a failure.

In this parable are given to us the causes of failure; and the requirements which are necessary in order to enable impressions to become permanent.

I. The causes of failure.

1. The first of these is want of spiritual perception. Some of the seed fell by the wayside. There are persons whose religion is all outside—it never penetrates beyond the intellect. Duty is recognised in word—not felt. They are regular at church—understand the Catechism and Articles—consider the Church a most venerable institution—have a respect for religion—but it never stirs the deeps of their being. They feel nothing in it beyond a safeguard for the decencies and respectabilities of social life; valuable, as parliaments and magistrates are valuable, but by no means the one awful question which fills the soul with fearful grandeur.

Truth of life is subject to failure in such hearts, in two ways,—By being trodden down:—wheat, dropped by a harvest cart upon a road lies outside. There comes a passenger's foot, and crushes some of it; then wheels come by—the wheel of traffic and the wheel of pleasure—crushing it grain by grain. It is "trodden down."

The fate of religion is easily understood from the parallel fate of a single sermon. Scarcely has its last tone vibrated on the ear, when a fresh impression is given

by the music which dismisses the congregation. That is succeeded by another impression, as your friend puts his arm in yours, and talks of some other matter, irrelevant, obliterating any slight seriousness which the sermon produced. Another, and another, and another, —and the word is *trodden down.* Observe, there is nothing wrong in these impressions. The farmer's cart which crushes the grain by the wayside is rolling by on rightful business — and the stage and the pedestrian are in their place—simply the seed is not. It is not the wrongness of the impressions which treads religion down; but only this, that outside religion yields in turn to other outside impressions which are stronger.

Again, conceptions of religious life, which are only conceptions outward, having no lodgment in the heart, *disappear.* Fowls of the air came and devoured the seed. Have you ever seen grain scattered on the road? The sparrow from the housetop, and the chickens from the barn, rush in, and within a minute after it has been scattered, not the shadow of a grain is left. This is the picture: not of thought crushed by degrees—but of thought dissipated, and no man can tell when or how it went. Swiftly do these winged thoughts come, when we pray, or read, or listen; in our inattentive, sauntering, wayside hours: and before we can be upon our guard, the very trace of holier purposes has disappeared. In our purest moods, when we kneel to pray, or gather round the altar, down into the very Holy of Holies sweep these foul birds of the air, villain fancies, demon

thoughts. The germ of life, the small seed of impression, is gone—where, you know not. But it is gone. Inattentiveness of spirit, produced by want of spiritual interest, is the first cause of disappointment.

2. A second cause of failure is want of depth in character. Some fell on stony ground. Stony ground means often the soil with which many loose stones are intermixed; but that is not the stony ground meant here: this stony ground is the thin layer of earth upon a bed of rock. Shallow soil is like superficial character. You meet with such persons in life. There is nothing deep about them—all they do and all they have is on the surface. The superficial servant's work is done: but lazily, partially—not thoroughly. The superficial workman's labour will not bear looking into—but it bears a showy outside. The very dress of such persons betrays the slatternly, incomplete character of their minds. When religion comes in contact with persons of this stamp, it shares the fate of everything else. It is taken up in a superficial way.

There is deep knowledge of human nature and exquisite fidelity to truth in the single touch by which the impression of religion on them is described. The seed sprang up quickly; and then withered away as quickly, because it had no depth of root. There is a quick easily-moved susceptibility, that rapidly exhibits the slightest breath of those emotions which play upon the surface of the soul, and then as rapidly passes off. In such persons words are ever at command—voluble and impassioned words. Tears flow readily. The expressive

features exhibit every passing shade of thought. Every thought and every feeling plays upon the surface—everything that is sown springs up at once with vehement vegetation. But slightness and inconstancy go together with violence. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." True; but also out of the emptiness of the heart the mouth can speak even more volubly. He who can always find the word which is appropriate and adequate to his emotions, is not the man whose emotions are deepest: warmth of feeling is one thing—permanence is another. On Tuesday last, they who went to the table most moved and touched were not necessarily those who raised in a wise observer's breast the strongest hope of persistence in the life of Christ. Rather those who were calm and subdued:—that which springs up quickly often does so merely from this, that it has no depth of earth to give it room to strike its roots down and deep.

A young man of this stamp came to Christ—running, kneeling, full of warm expressions, engaging gestures, and professed admiration, worshipping and saying, "Good Master!" Lovable and interesting as such always are—Jesus loved him. But it lay all upon the surface, withered away when the depth of its meaning was explored. The test of self-sacrifice was applied to his apparent love. He was ready for anything. Well, "Go, sell that thou hast." It had sprung up quickly: but it withered because it had no root.

And that is another stroke of truth in the delineation of this character. Not wealth nor comfort is the bane

of its religion: but "When tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by they are offended." A pleasant, sunny religion would be the life to suit them. "They receive the Word with joy." So long as they have happiness they can love God—feel very grateful, and expand with generous emotions. But when God speaks as he spoke to Job out of the whirlwind, and the sun is swept from the face of their heaven, and the sharp Cross is the only object left in the dreary landscape, and the world blames, and friends wound the wounded with cold speech and hollow commonplaces: what is there in superficial religion to keep the heart in its place and vigorous still?

Another point. Not without significance is it represented that the superficial character is connected with the hard heart. Beneath the light thin surface of easily stirred dust lies the bed of rock. The shallow ground was stony ground. And it is among the children of light enjoyment and unsettled life that we must look for stony heartlessness:—not in the world of business—not among the poor, crushed to the earth by privation and suffering. These harden the character, but often leave the heart soft. If you wish to know what hollowness and heartlessness are, you must seek for them in the world of light, elegant, superficial Fashion—where frivolity has turned the heart into a rockbed of selfishness. Say what men will of the heartlessness of Trade, it is nothing compared with the heartlessness of Fashion. Say what they will of the atheism of science, it is nothing to the atheism of that round

of pleasure in which many a heart lives: dead while it lives.

3. Once more, impressions come to nothing when the mind is subjected to dissipating influences, and yields to them. "Some fell among thorns."

There is nutriment enough in the ground for thorns, and enough for wheat; but not enough, in any ground, for both wheat and thorns. The agriculturist thins his nursery-ground, and the farmer weeds his field, and the gardener removes the superfluous grapes, for that very reason: in order that the dissipated sap may be concentrated in a few plants vigorously.

So, in the same way, the heart has a certain power of loving. But love, dissipated on many objects, concentrates itself on none. God *or* the world—not both. "No man can serve two masters." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." He that has learned many accomplishments or sciences, generally knows none thoroughly. Multifariousness of knowledge is commonly opposed to depth—variety of affections is generally not found with intensity.

Two classes of dissipating influences distract such minds. "The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word." The *cares* of this world—its petty trifling distractions—not wrong in themselves—simply dissipating—filling the heart with paltry solicitudes and mean anxieties—*wearing*. Martha was "cumbered with much serving." Her household and her domestic duties, real duties, divided her heart with Christ. The time of danger, therefore, is when life

expands into new situations and larger spheres, bringing with them new cares. It is not in the earlier stages of existence that these *distractions* are felt. Thorns sprang up and choked the wheat as they grew together. You see a religious man taking up a new pursuit with eagerness. At first no danger is suspected. But it is a *distraction*—something that distracts or divides—he has become dissipated, and by and by you remark that his zest is gone—he is no longer the man he was. He talks as before—but the life is gone from what he says:—his energies are frittered. The Word is "choked."

Again, the deceitfulness of riches dissipate. True as always to nature, never exaggerating, never one-sided: Christ does not say, that such religion brings forth no fruit, but only that it brings none to perfection. A fanatic bans all wealth and all worldly care as the department of the devil,—Christ says, "How hardly shall they that *trust* in riches enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." He does not say the divided heart has no religion, but it is a dwarfed, stunted, feeble religion. Many such a Christian do you find among the rich and the titled, who, as a less encumbered man, might have been a resolute soldier of the Cross; but he is only now a realization of the old Pagan fable—a spiritual giant buried under a mountain of gold. Oh! many, many such we meet in our higher classes, pining with a nameless want, pressed by a heavy sense of the weariness of existence, strengthless in the midst of affluence, and incapable even of tasting the profusion of comfort which is heaped around them.

There is a way God their Father has of dealing with such which is no pleasant thing to bear. In agriculture it is called *weeding*. In gardening it is done by *pruning*. It is the cutting off the over-luxuriant shoots, in order to call back the wandering juices into the healthier and more living parts. In religion it is described thus,—"Every branch that beareth fruit He purgeth" . . . . Lot had such a danger, and was subjected to such a treatment. A quarrel had arisen between Abraham's herdsmen and his. It was necessary to part. Abraham, in that noble way of his, gave him the choice of the country when they separated. Either hand for Abraham: either the right hand or the left:—what cared the Pilgrim of the Invisible for fertile lands or rugged sands? Lot chose wisely, as they of the world speak. Well, if this world be all:—he got a rich soil—became a prince, had kings for his society and neighbours. It was nothing to Lot that "the men of the land were sinners before the Lord exceedingly"—enough that it was well watered everywhere. But his wife became enervated by voluptuousness, and his children tainted with ineradicable corruption—the moral miasma of the society wherein he had made his home. Two warnings God gave him—First, his home and property were spoiled by the enemy; then came the fire from heaven; and he fled from the cities of the plain a ruined man. His wife looked back with lingering regret upon the splendid home of her luxury and voluptuousness, and was overwhelmed in the encrusting salt: his children carried with them into a new world the plague-spot of that profligacy which had

been the child of affluence and idleness; and the spirit of that rain of fire—of the buried Cities of the Plain—rose again in the darkest of the crimes which the Old Testament records, to poison the new society at its very fountain. And so the old man stood at last upon the brink of the grave, a blackened ruin scathed by lightning, over the grave of his wife, and the shame of his family—saved, but only "so as by fire."

It is a painful thing, that weeding work. "Every branch in me that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The keen edge of God's pruning-knife cuts sheer through. No weak tenderness stops Him whose love seeks Goodness, not Comfort, for His servants. A man's distractions are in his wealth—and perhaps fire or failure make him bankrupt: what he feels is God's sharp knife. Pleasure has dissipated his heart, and a stricken frame forbids his enjoying pleasure—shattered nerves and broken health wear out the life of Life. Or perhaps it comes in a sharper, sadder form: the shaft of death goes home—there is heard the wail of danger in his household. And then, when sickness has passed on to hopelessness, and hopelessness has passed on to death, the crushed man goes into the chamber of the dead; and there, when he shuts down the lid upon the coffin of his wife, or the coffin of his child, his heart begins to tell him the meaning of all this. Thorns had been growing in his heart, and the sharp knife has been at work making room—but by an awful desolation—tearing up and cutting down, that the Life of God in the soul may not be choked.

II. For the permanence of religious impressions this parable suggests three requirements: "They on the good ground are they which, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."

1. "An honest and good heart." Earnestness; that is, sincerity of purpose. Now, sincerity is reckoned, by an exaggeration, sometimes the only virtue. So that a man be sincere, they say, it matters little what he thinks or what he is: but in Truth is the basis of all goodness; without which goodness of any kind is impossible. There are faults more heinous, but none more ruinous, than insincerity. Subtle minds, which have no broad firm footing in reality, lose everything by degrees, and may be transformed into any shape of evil: may become guilty of anything, and excuse it to themselves. To this sincerity is given, in the parable, success: A harvest thirty-fold, sixty-fold, an hundred-fold.

This earnestness is the first requisite for real success in everything. Do you wish to become rich? You may become rich: that is, if you desire it in no half-way, but thoroughly. A miser sacrifices all to this single passion; hoards farthings, and dies possessed of wealth. Do you wish to master any science or accomplishment?—Give yourself to it, and it lies beneath your feet. Time and pains will do anything. This world is given as the prize for the men in earnest; and that which is true of this world is truer still of the world to come. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." Only there

is this difference. In the pursuit of wealth, knowledge, or reputation, circumstances have power to mar the wisest schemes. The hoard of years may be lost in a single night. The wisdom hived up by a whole life may perish when some fever impairs memory. But in the kingdom of Christ, where inward *character* is the prize, no chance can rob earnestness of its exactly proportioned due of success. "*Whatsoever* a man soweth, that shall he also reap." There is no blight, nor mildew, nor scorching sun, nor rain-deluge, which can turn that harvest into a failure. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." . . . Sow for time, and *probably* you will succeed in time. Sow the seeds of Life—Humbleness, Pure-heartedness, Love; and in the long Eternity which lies before the soul, every minutest grain will come up again with an increase of thirty, sixty, or an hundred fold.

2. Meditation is a second requisite for permanence. They *keep* the word which they have heard.

Now, meditation is often confounded with something which only partially resembles it. Sometimes we sit in a kind of day-dream, the mind expatiating far away into vacancy, whilst minutes and hours slip by, almost unmarked, in mere vacuity. This is not meditation, but reverie,—a state to which the soul resigns itself in pure passivity. When the soul is absent and dreaming, let no man think that *that* is spiritual meditation, or anything that is spiritual.

Meditation is partly a passive, partly an active state. Whoever has pondered long over a plan which he is

anxious to accomplish, without distinctly seeing at first the way, knows what meditation is. The subject itself presents itself in leisure moments spontaneously: but then all this sets the mind at work—contriving, imagining, rejecting, modifying. It is in this way that one of the greatest of English engineers, a man uncouth and unaccustomed to regular discipline of mind, is said to have accomplished his most marvellous triumphs. He threw bridges over almost impracticable torrents, and pierced the eternal mountains for his viaducts. Sometimes a difficulty brought all the work to a pause: then he would shut himself up in his room, eat nothing, speak to no one, abandon himself intensely to the contemplation of that on which his heart was set; and at the end of two or three days, would come forth serene and calm, walk to the spot, and quietly give orders which seemed the result of superhuman intuition. This was meditation.

Again, he knows what it is, who has ever earnestly and sincerely loved one living human being. The image of his friend rises unbidden by day and night, stands before his soul in the street and in the field, comes athwart his every thought, and mixes its presence with his every plan. So far all is passive. But besides this he plans and contrives for that other's happiness—tries to devise what would give pleasure—examines his own conduct and conversation, to avoid that which can by any possibility give pain. This is meditation.

So, too, is meditation on religious truths carried on. If it first be loved, it will recur spontaneously to the heart.

But then it is dwelt on till it receives innumerable applications—is again and again brought up to the sun and tried in various lights, and so incorporates itself with the realities of practical existence.

Meditation is done in silence. By it we renounce our narrow individuality, and expatiate into that which is infinite. Only in the sacredness of inward silence does the soul truly meet the secret, hiding, God. The strength of resolve, which afterwards shapes life and mixes itself with action, is the fruit of those sacred, solitary moments. There is a divine depth in silence. We meet God alone.

For this reason, I urged it upon so many of you to spend the hours previous to your Confirmation separate from friends, from books, from everything human, and to force yourselves into the Awful Presence.

Have we never felt how human presence, if frivolous, in such moments frivolises the soul, and how impossible it is to come in contact with any thoughts which are sublime, or drink in one inspiration which is from Heaven, without degrading it, even though surrounded by all that would naturally suggest tender and awful feeling, when such are by?

It is not the number of books you read; nor the variety of sermons which you hear; nor the amount of religious conversation in which you mix: but it is the frequency and the earnestness with which you meditate on these things, till the truth which may be in them becomes your own, and part of your own being, that ensures your spiritual growth.

3. The third requisite is endurance. "They bring forth fruit with patience." Patience is of two kinds. There is an active and there is a passive endurance. The former is a masculine, the latter for the most part a feminine virtue. Female patience is exhibited chiefly in fortitude; in bearing pain and sorrow meekly without complaining. In the old Hebrew life, female endurance shines almost as brightly as in any life which Christianity itself can mould. Hannah, under the provocations and taunts of her rival, answering not again her husband's rebuke, humbly replying to Eli's unjust blame, is true to the type of womanly endurance. For the type of man's endurance you may look to the patience of the early Christians under persecution. They came away from the Sanhedrim to endure and bear; but it was to bear as conquerors rushing on to victory, preaching the truth with all boldness, and defying the power of the united world to silence them. These two diverse qualities are joined in One, and only One of woman born, in perfection. One there was in whom human nature was exhibited in all its elements symmetrically complete. One in whom, as I lately said, there met all that was manliest and all that was most womanly. His endurance of pain and grief was that of the woman rather than the man. A tender spirit dissolving into tears, meeting the dark hour not with the stern defiance of the man and the stoic, but with gentleness, and trust, and love, and shrinking, like a woman. But when it came to the question in Pilate's judgment-hall, or the mockeries of Herod's men of war, or the discussion with the Pharisees,

or the exposure of the hollow falsehoods by which social, domestic, and religious life were sapped, the Woman has disappeared, and the hardy resolution of the Man, with more than manly daring, is found in her stead. This is the "patience" for us to cultivate: To bear and to persevere. However dark and profitless, however painful and weary existence may have become, however any man like Elijah may be tempted to cast himself beneath the juniper-tree and say, "It is enough: now, O Lord!"—life is not done, and our Christian character is not won, so long as God has anything left for us to suffer, or anything left for us to do.

Patience, however, has another meaning. It is the opposite of that impatience which cannot *wait*. This is one of the difficulties of spiritual life. We are disappointed if the harvest do not come at once.

Last Tuesday, doubtless, you thought that all was done, and that there would be no more falling back.

Alas! a little experience will correct that. If the husbandman, disappointed at the delay which ensues before the blade breaks the soil, were to rake away the earth to examine if germination were going on, he would have a poor harvest. He must have "long patience, till he receive the early and the latter rain." The winter frost must mellow the seed lying in the genial bosom of the earth: the rains of spring must swell it, and the suns of summer mature it. So with you. It is the work of a long life to become a Christian. Many, oh! many a time, are we tempted to say, "I make no progress at all. It is only failure after

failure. Nothing grows." Now look at the sea when the flood is coming in. Go and stand by the sea-beach, and you will think that the ceaseless flux and reflux is but retrogression equal to the advance. But look again in an hour's time, and the whole ocean has advanced. Every advance has been beyond the last, and every retrograde movement has been an imperceptible trifle less than the last. This is progress: to be estimated at the end of hours, not minutes. And this is *Christian* progress. Many a fluctuation—many a backward motion with a rush at times so vehement that all seems lost:—but if the Eternal work be real, every failure has been a real gain, and the next does not carry us so far back as we were before. Every advance is a real gain, and part of it is never lost. Both when we advance and when we fail, we gain. We are nearer to God than we were. The flood of spirit-life has carried us up higher on the everlasting shores, where the waves of life beat no more, and its fluctuations end, and all is safe at last. "This is the faith and patience of the saints."

It is because of the second of these requirements, Meditation, that I am anxious we should meet on Sunday next for an early Communion, at eight o'clock. I desire that the candidates may have a more solemn and definite Communion of their own, with few others present except their own relations and friends. In silence and quietness, we will meet together then. Before the world has put on its full robe of light, and before the busy gay crowd have begun to throng our

streets,—before the distractions of the day begin, we will consecrate the early freshness of our souls—untrodden, unhardened, undissipated—to God. We will meet in the simplicity of brotherhood and sisterhood. We will have Communion in a sacred meal, which shall exhibit as nearly as may be the idea of family affection. Ye that are beginning life, and we who know something of it—ye that offer yourselves for the first time at that table, and we who, after sad experience and repeated failure, still *desire* again to renew our aspirations and our vows to Him—we will come and breathe together that prayer, which I commended to you at your confirmation,—"Our Father, which art in Heaven, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

III.

Preached June 10, 1849.

JACOB'S WRESTLING.

GEN. xxxii. 28, 29.—"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there."

THE complexion of this story is peculiarly Jewish. It contains three points which are specially interesting to every Jew in a national point of view. It explained to him why he was called Israelite. It traces the origin of his own name, Israelite, to a distant ancestor, who had signally exhibited religious strength, and been, in the language of those time, a wrestler with God, from whence he had obtained the name Israel. It casts much deep and curious interest round an otherwise insignificant village, Peniel, where this transaction had taken place, and which derived its name from it, Peniel, the face of God. And, besides, it explained the origin of a singular custom, which might seem a superstitious one, of not suffering a particular muscle to be eaten, and regarding it with a kind of religious awe, as the part in which Jacob was said by tradition to have

been injured, by the earnest tension of his frame during this struggle. So far all is Jewish, narrow, merely of local interest. Besides this, much of the story is evidently mythical.

It is clear at once, that it belongs to that earlier period of literature when traditions were preserved in a poetical shape, adapted to the rude conceptions of the day; but enshrining an inner and a deeper truth. To disengage this truth from the form in which it is encased, is the duty of the expositor.

Now, putting aside the form of this narrative, and looking into the heart and meaning of it, it will become apparent that we have no longer anything infantine, or Jewish, or of limited interest, but a wide truth, wide as human nature; and that there is before us the record of an inward spiritual struggle, as real now in the nineneenth century as then: as real in every earnest man as it was in the history of Jacob.

We take these points:

I. The nameless secret of Existence.

II. The revelation of that secret to the Soul.

The circumstances which preceded this event were these: more than twenty years before, Jacob had been guilty of a deliberate sin. He had deceived his father; he had over-reached his free-spirited, impetuous, open-hearted brother Esau. Never, during all those twenty years, had he seen the man whom he had injured. But now, on the point of returning to his native country, news was brought to him of his brother's approach, which made a meeting inevitable. Jacob made all his

dispositions and arrangements to prepare for the worst. He sent over the brook Jabbok first the part of his family whom he valued least, and who would be the first to meet Esau; then those whom he loved most, that, in the event of danger, they might have the greatest facility in escaping; then Jacob was left alone, in the still dark night. It was one of those moments in existence when a crisis is before us, to which great and pregnant issues are linked—when all has been done that foresight can devise, and the hour of action being past, the instant of reaction has come. Then the soul is left passive and helpless, gazing face to face upon the anticipated and dreadful moment which is slowly moving on. It is in these hours that, having gone through in imagination the whole circle of resources, and found them nothing, and ourselves powerless, as in the hands of a Destiny, there comes a strange and nameless dread, a horrible feeling of insecurity, which gives the consciousness of a want, and forces us to feel out into the abyss for something that is mightier than flesh and blood to lean upon.

Then, therefore, it was that there came the moment of a conflict within the soul of Jacob, so terrible and so violent that it seemed an actual struggle with a living man. In the darkness he had heard a Voice, and came in contact with a Form, and felt a Presence, the reality of which there was no mistaking. Now, to the unscientific mind, that which is real seems to be necessarily material too. What wonder if, to the unscientific mind of Jacob, this conflict, so real, and attended in his person

with such tangible results, seemed all human and material—a conflict with a tangible antagonist? What wonder if tradition preserved it in such a form? Suppose we admit that the Being, whose awful presence Jacob felt, had no Form which could be grappled by a human hand, is it less real for that? Are there no realities but those which the hand can touch and the eye see?

Jacob in that hour felt the dark secret and mystery of existence.

Upon this I shall make three remarks.

1. The first has reference to the contrast observable between this and a former revelation made to Jacob's soul. This was not the first time it had found itself face to face with God. Twenty years before, he had seen in vision a ladder reared against the sky, and angels ascending and descending on it. Exceedingly remarkable. Immediately after his transgression, when leaving his father's home, a banished man, to be a wanderer for many years, this first meeting took place. Fresh from his sin, God met him in tenderness and forgiveness. He saw the token which told him that all communication between heaven and earth was not severed. The way was clear and unimpeded still. Messages of reciprocated love might pass between the Father and His sinful child, as the angels in the dream ascended and descended on the visionary ladder. The possibility of saintliness was not forfeited. All *that* the Vision taught him. Then took place that touching Covenant, in which Jacob bound himself to serve gratefully his father's God, and

vowed the vow of a consecrated heart to Him. All that was now past. After twenty years God met him again; but this second intercourse was of a very different character. It was no longer God the Forgiver, God the Protector, God the covenanting Love, that met Jacob; but God the Awful, the Unnameable, whose breath blasts, at whose touch the flesh of the mortal shrinks and shrivels up. This is exactly the reverse of what might have been anticipated. You would have expected the darker vision of experience to come first. First the storm-struggle of the soul; then the Vision of Peace. It was exactly the reverse.

Yet all this, tried by experience, is a most true and living account. The awful feelings about Life and God are *not* those which characterise our earlier years. It is quite natural that in the first espousals of the soul in its freshness to God, bright and hopeful feelings should be the predominant or the only ones. Joy marks, and ought to mark, early religion. Nay, by God's merciful arrangement, even sin is not that crushing thing in early life which it sometimes becomes in later years, when we mourn not so much a calculable number of sinful acts, as a deep pervading sinfulness. Remorse does not corrode with its evil power then. Forgiveness is not only granted, but consciously and joyfully felt. It is as life matures, that the weight of life, the burden of this unintelligible world, and the mystery of the hidden God, are felt.

A vast amount of insincerity is produced by mistaking

this. We expect in the religion of the child the experience which can only be true in the religion of the man. We force into their lips the language which describes the wrestling of the soul with God. It is twenty years too soon. God, in His awfulness, the thought of mystery which scathes the soul—how can they know *that* yet, before they have got the thews and sinews of the man's heart to master such a thought? They know nothing yet—they *ought* to know nothing yet of God but as the Father who is around their beds —they *ought* to see nothing yet but Heaven, and angels ascending and descending.

This morning, my young brethren, you presented yourselves at the Communion Table for the first time. Some of you, we trust, were conscious of meeting God. Only let us not confound the dates of Christian experience. If you did, it was not as Jacob met God on this occasion, but rather as He met Him on the earlier one. It were only a miserable forcing of insincerity upon you to require that this solemn, fearful sensation of his should be yours. Rather, we trust, you felt God present as the Lord of Love. A ladder was raised for you to heaven. Oh! we trust that the feeling in some cases at least was this—as of angels ascending and descending upon a Child of God.

2. Again, I remark, that the end and aim of Jacob's struggle was to know the name of God. "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name." A very unimportant desire at first sight. For what signifies a name? In these days, when names are only epithets, it signifies nothing.

"Jehovah, Jove, or Lord," as the "Universal Prayer" insinuates, are all the same. Now, to assert that it matters not whether God be called Jehovah, Jove, or Lord, is true, if it mean this that a devout and earnest heart is accepted by God, let the name be what it will by which He is addressed. But if it mean that Jove and Jehovah express the same Being—that the character of Him whom the Pagan worshipped was the same as the character of Him whom Israel adored under the name of Jehovah—that they refer to the same group of ideas —or that *always* names are but names, then we must look much deeper.

In the Hebrew history are discernible three periods distinctly marked, in which names and words bore very different characters. These three, it has been observed by acute philologists, correspond to the periods in which the nation bore the three different appellations of Hebrews, Israelites, Jews.

In the first of these periods, names meant truths, and words were the symbols of realities. The characteristics of the names given then were simplicity and sincerity. They were drawn from a few simple sources: either from some characteristic of the individual, as Jacob, the supplanter, or Moses, drawn from the water; or from the idea of family, as Ben-jamin, the son of my right hand; or from the conception of the tribe or nation, then gradually consolidating itself; or, lastly, from the religious idea of God. But in this case not the highest notion of God—not Jah or Jehovah, but simply the earlier and simpler idea of

Deity: El.—Israel, the prince of El; Peniel, the face of El.

In these days names were real, but the conceptions they contained were not the loftiest.

The second period begins about the time of the departure from Egypt, and it is characterised by unabated simplicity, with the addition of sublimer thought and feeling more intensely religious. The heart of the nation was big with mighty and new religious truth —and the feelings with which the national heart was swelling found vent in the names which were given abundantly. God, under His name Jah, the noblest assemblage of spiritual truths yet conceived, became the adjunct to names of places and persons. Oshea's name is changed into Je-hoshua.

Observe moreover, that in this period there was no fastidious, over-refined chariness in the use of that name. Men, conscious of deep and real reverence, are not fearful of the appearance of irreverence. The word became a common word, as it always may, so long as it is *felt*, and awe is *real*. A mighty cedar was called a cedar of Jehovah—a lofty mountain, a mountain of Jehovah. Human beauty even was praised by such an epithet. Moses was divinely fair, beautiful to God. The Eternal Name became an adjunct. No beauty—no greatness—no goodness, was conceivable, except as emanating from Him: therefore His name was freely but most devoutly used.

Like the earlier period, in this too, words mean

realities; but, unlike the earlier period, they are impregnated with deeper religious thought.

The third period was at its zenith in the time of Christ:—words had lost their meaning, and shared the hollow unreal state of all things. A man's name might be Judas, and still he might be a traitor. A man might be called Pharisee, exclusively religious, and yet the name might only cover the hollowness of hypocrisy; or he might be called most noble Festus, and be the meanest tyrant that ever sat upon a pro-consular chair. This is the period in which every keen and wise observer knows that the decay of national religious feeling has begun. That decay in the meaning of words, that lowering of the standard of the ideas for which they stand, is a certain mark of this. The debasement of a language is a sure mark of the debasement of a nation. The insincerity of a language is a proof of the insincerity of a nation: for a time comes in the history of a nation when words no longer stand for things; when names are given for the sake of an euphonious sound; and when titles are but the epithets of unmeaning courtesy:—a time when Majesty—Defender of the Faith—Most Noble—Worshipful, and Honourable—not only mean nothing, but do not flush the cheek with the shame of convicted falsehood when they are worn as empty ornaments.

The Name of God shares this fate. A nation may reach the state in which the Eternal Name can be used to point a sentence, or adorn a familiar conversation, and no longer shock the ear with the sound of blasphemy,

because in good truth the Name no longer stands for the Highest, but for a meaner conception, an idol of the debased mind. For example, in a foreign language, the language of a light and irreligious people, the Eternal Name can be used as a light expletive and conversational ejaculation, and not shock any religious sensibility. You could not do that in English. It would sound like a blasphemy to say, in light talk, My God! or Good God! Your flesh would creep at hearing it. But in that language the word has lost its sacredness, because it has lost its meaning. It means no more than Jove or Baal. It means a Being whose existence has become a nursery fable. No marvel that we are taught to pray, "Hallowed be Thy name." We cannot pray a deeper prayer for our country than to say—Never may that Name in English stand for a lower idea than it stands for now. There is a solemn power in words, because words are the expression of character. "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

Yet in this period, exactly in proportion as the solemnity of the idea was gone, reverence was scrupulously paid to the corpse-like word which remained and had once enclosed it. In that hollow, artificial age, the Jew would wipe his pen before he ventured to write the Name—he would leave out the vowels of the sacred Jehovah, and substitute those of the less sacred Elohim. In that kind of age, too, men bow to the name of Jesus, often just in that proportion in which they have ceased to recognise His true grandeur and majesty of character.

In such an age, it would be indeed preposterous to spend the strength upon an inquiry such as this: "Tell me Thy Name?" Jehovah, Jove, or Lord—what matter? But Jacob did not live in this third period, when names meant nothing: nor did he live in the second, when words contained the deepest truth the nation is ever destined to receive. But he lived in the first age, when men are sincere, and truthful, and earnest, and names exhibit character. To tell Jacob the Name of God was to reveal to him What God is, and Who.

3. I observe a third thing. This desire of Jacob was not the one we should naturally have expected on such an occasion. He is alone—his past fault is coming retributively on a guilty conscience—he dreads the meeting with his brother. His soul is agonized with *that*, and *that* we naturally expect will be the subject and the burden of his prayer. No such thing! Not a word about Esau—not a word about personal danger at all. All that is banished completely for the time, and deeper thoughts are grappling with his soul. To get safe through to-morrow? No, no, no! To be blessed by God—to know Him, and what He is—that is the battle of Jacob's soul from sunset till the dawn of day.

And this is our struggle—*the* struggle. Let any true man go down into the deeps of his own being, and answer us,—what is the cry that comes from the most real part of his nature? Is it the cry for daily bread? Jacob asked for that in his *first* communing with God—

preservation, safety. Is it even this,—to be forgiven our sins? Jacob had a sin to be forgiven, and in that most solemn moment of his existence he did not say a syllable about it. Or is it this—"Hallowed be Thy Name?" No, my brethren. Out of our frail and yet sublime humanity, the demand that rises in the earthlier hours of our religion may be this—Save my soul; but in the most unearthly moments it is this—"Tell me thy Name." We move through a world of mystery; and the deepest question is, What is the being that is ever near, sometimes felt, never seen,—That which has haunted us from childhood with a dream of something surpassingly fair, which has never yet been realized—That which sweeps through the soul at times as a desolation, like the blast from the wings of the Angel of Death, leaving us stricken and silent in our loneliness—That which has touched us in our tenderest point, and the flesh has quivered with agony, and our mortal affections have shrivelled up with pain—That which comes to us in aspirations of nobleness, and conceptions of superhuman excellence. Shall we say It or He? What is It? Who is He? Those anticipations of Immortality and God—what are they? Are they the mere throbbings of my own heart, heard and mistaken for a living something beside me? Are they the sound of my own wishes, echoing through the vast void of Nothingness? or shall I call them God, Father, Spirit, Love? A living Being within me or outside me? Tell me Thy Name, thou awful mystery of Loveliness! This is the struggle of all earnest life.

We come now to,

II. The revelation of the Mystery.

1. It was revealed by awe. Very significantly are we told, that the Divine antagonist seemed as it were anxious to depart as the day was about to dawn; and that Jacob held Him more convulsively fast, as if aware that the daylight was likely to rob him of his anticipated blessing: in which there seems concealed a very deep truth. God is approached more nearly in that which is indefinite than in that which is definite and distinct. He is felt in awe, and wonder and worship, rather than in clear conceptions. There is a sense in which darkness has more of God than light has. He dwells in the thick darkness. Moments of tender, vague mystery often bring distinctly the feeling of His presence. When day breaks and distinctness comes, the Divine has evaporated from the soul like morning dew. In sorrow, haunted by uncertain presentiments, we feel the infinite around us. The gloom disperses, the world's joy comes again, and it seems as if God were gone—the Being who had touched us with a withering hand, and wrestled with us, yet whose presence, even when most terrible, was more blessed than His absence. It is true, even literally, that the darkness reveals God. Every morning God draws the curtain of the garish light across His eternity; and we lose the Infinite. We look down on earth instead of up to heaven, on a narrower and more contracted spectacle—that which is examined by the microscope when the telescope is laid aside—

smallness, instead of vastness. "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labour till the evening;" and in the dust and pettiness of life we seem to cease to behold Him: then at night He undraws the curtain again, and we see how much of God and Eternity the bright distinct day has hidden from us. Yes, in solitary, silent, vague darkness, the Awful One is near.

This morning, young brethren, we endeavoured to act on this belief—we met in stillness, before the full broad glare of day had rested on our world. Your first communion implored His blessing in the earlier hour which seems so peculiarly His. Before the dull, and deadening, and earthward influences of the world had dried up the dew of fresh morning feeling, you tried to fortify your souls with a sense of His presence. This night, before to-morrow's light shall dawn, pray that He will not depart until he has left upon your hearts the blessing of a strength which shall be yours through the garish day, and through dry, scorching life, even to the close of your days.

2. Again; this revelation was made in an unsyllabled blessing. Jacob requested two things. He asked for a blessing—and he prayed to know the Name of God. God gave him the blessing. "He blessed him there," but refused to tell His Name. "Wherefore dost thou ask after my Name?"

In this, too, seems to lie a most important truth. Names have a power, a strange power, of hiding God. Speech has been bitterly defined as the art of hiding thought. Well, that sarcastic definition has in it a

truth. The Eternal Word is the Revealer of God's thought; and every *true* word of man is *originally* the expression of a thought; but by degrees the word hides the thought. Language is valuable for the things of this life; but for the things of the other world, it is an encumbrance almost as much as an assistance. Words often hide from us our ignorance of even earthly truth. The child asks for information, and we satiate his curiosity with words. Who does not know how we satisfy ourselves with the name of some strange bird or plant, or the name of some new law in nature? It is a mystery perplexing us before. We get the name, and fancy we understand something more than we did before; but, in truth, we are more hopelessly ignorant: for before we felt there was a something we had not attained, and so we inquired and searched—now, we fancy we possess it, because we have got the name by which it is known: and the word covers over the abyss of our ignorance. If Jacob had got a *word*, that word might have satisfied him. He would have said, Now I understand God, and know all about Him.

Besides, names and words soon lose their meaning. In the process of years and centuries the meaning dies off them like the sunlight from the hills. The hills are there—the colour and life are gone. The words of that creed, for example, which we read last Sunday (the Athanasian), were living words a few centuries ago. They have changed their meaning, and are, to ninety-nine out of every hundred, only dead words. Yet men

tenaciously hold to the expressions of which they do not understand the meaning, and which have a very different meaning now from what they had once—Person, Procession, Substance; and they are almost worse with them than without them—for they conceal their ignorance, and place a barrier against the earnestness of inquiry. We repeat the creed by rote, but the profound truths of Being which the creed contains, how many of us understand?

All this affords an instructive lesson to parents and to teachers. In the education of a pupil or a child, the wise way is to deal with him as God dealt with His pupil, the child-man Jacob: for before the teaching of God, the wisest man—what is he but a child? God's plan was not to give names and words, but truths of feeling. That night, in that strange scene, He impressed on Jacob's soul a religious awe which was hereafter to develop,—not a set of formal expressions, which would have satisfied with husks the cravings of the intellect and shut up the soul:—Jacob felt the Infinite, who is more truly felt when least named. Words would have reduced that to the Finite: for, oh! to know all about God is one thing—to know the living God is another. Our rule seems to be this: Let a child's religion be expansive—capable of expansion—as little systematic as possible: let it lie upon the heart like the light loose soil, which can be broken through as the heart bursts into fuller life. If it be trodden down hard and stiff in formularies, it is more than probable that the whole must be burst through, and broken violently

and thrown off altogether, when the soul requires room to germinate.

And in this way, my young brethren, I have tried to deal with you. Not in creeds, nor even in the stiffness of the catechism, has truth been put before you. Rather has it been trusted to the impulses of the heart; on which, we believe, God works more efficaciously than we can do. A few simple truths: and then these have been left to work, and germinate, and swell. Baptism reveals to you this truth for the heart, that God is your Father, and that Christ has encouraged you to live as your Father's children. It has revealed that Name which Jacob knew not—Love. Confirmation has told you another truth, that of self-dedication to Him. Heaven is the service of God. The highest blessedness of life is, powers and self consecrated to His will. These are the germs of truth: but it would have been miserable self-delusion, and most pernicious teaching, to have aimed at exhausting truth, or systematizing it. We are jealous of over-systematic teaching. God's love to you—the sacrifice of your lives to God—but the *meaning* of that? Oh! a long, long life will not exhaust the meaning—the Name of God. Feel Him more and more—all else is but empty words.

Lastly, the effect of this Revelation was to change Jacob's character. His name was changed from Jacob to Israel, because himself was an altered man. Hitherto there had been something subtle in his character—a certain cunning and craft—a want of breadth, as if he

had no firm footing upon reality. The forgiveness of God twenty years before had not altered this. He remained Jacob, the subtle supplanter still. For, indeed, a man whose religion is chiefly the sense of forgiveness, does not thereby rise into integrity or firmness of character—a certain tenderness of character may very easily go along with a great deal of subtlety. Jacob was tender and devout, and grateful for God's pardon, and only half honest still. But this half-insincere man is brought into contact with the awful God, and his subtlety falls from him. He becomes real at once. Every insincere habit of mind shrivels in the face of God. One clear true glance into the depths of Being, and the whole man is altered. The name changes because the character has changed. No longer Jacob the supplanter, but Israel the Prince of God—the champion of the Lord, who had fought *with* God and conquered; and who, henceforth, will fight *for* God and be His true loyal soldier: a larger, more unselfish name—a larger and more unselfish man—honest and true at last. No man becomes honest till he has got face to face with God. There is a certain insincerity about us all—a something dramatic. One of those dreadful moments which throw us upon ourselves, and strip off the hollowness of our outside show, must come before the insincere is true.

And again, young brethren, such a moment, at least of truthfulness, ought to have been this morning. Let the old pass. Let the name of the world pass into the Christian name. Baptism and Confirmation, the one

gives, and the other reminds us of the giving of a better name and a truer. Henceforth be men. Lose the natural frailty, whatever it is. See God, and you *will* lose it.

To conclude, here is a question for each man separately —What is the name of your God? Not in the sense of this age, but in the sense of Jacob's age. What is the *Name* of the Deity you worship? In the present modern sense of Name, by which nothing more than epithet is meant, of course the reply is easy. The name of yours is the God of Christian worship—the threefold One—the Author of Existence, manifested in Divine humanity, commingling with us as pure spirit — the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. That, of course, you say is the Name of your God. Now, put away names —give words to the winds. What do you adore in your heart of hearts? What is the name oftenest on your lips in your unfettered, spontaneous moments? If we overheard your secret thoughts, who and what is it which is to you the greatest and the best that you would desire to realize? The character of the rich man, or the successful, or the admired? Would the worst misery which could happen to you be the wreck of property—the worst shame, not to have done wrong, but to have sunk in the estimation of society? Then in the classifications of earth, which separate men into Jews, Christians, Mahometans, you may rank as a worshipper of the Christian's God. But in the nomenclature of Heaven, where names cannot stand for things, God sees you as an idolator—your highest is not His

highest. The Name that is above every name is not the description of your God.

For life and death we have made our choice. The life of Christ—the life of Truth and Love; and if it must be, as the result of that, the Cross of Christ, with the obloquy and shame that wait on truth—that is the Name before which we bow. In this world "there are Gods many, and Lords many: but to us there is one Lord, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

IV.

Preached August 12, 1849.

CHRISTIAN PROGRESS BY OBLIVION OF THE PAST.

PHIL. iii. 13, 14.—"Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

THE first thing which strikes us on reading these verses is, that the Apostle Paul places himself on a level with the persons whom he addresses. He speaks to them as frail, weak men; and he gives them in himself a specimen of what frailty and weakness can achieve in the strength of Christ. And it is for this reason that the passage before us is one of the most encouraging in all the writings of St. Paul. For there is one aspect in which the apostle is presented to us, which is perhaps a depressing one. When we look at his almost superhuman career, reverence and admiration we must feel; but so far does he seem removed from ordinary life, that imitation appears out of the question. Let us select but two instances of this discouraging aspect of the apostle's

life. Most of us know the feeling of unaccountable depression which rests upon us when we find ourselves alone in a foreign town, with its tide of population ebbing and flowing past us, a mass of human life, in which we ourselves are nothing. But that was Paul's daily existence. He had consecrated himself to an almost perpetual exile. He had given up the endearments of domestic life for ever. Home, in this world, St. Paul had none. With a capacity for the tenderest feelings of our nature, he had chosen for his lot the task of living among strangers, and as soon as they ceased to be strangers, quitting them again. He went on month by month, attaching congregations to himself, and month by month dooming himself to severance. And yet I know not that we read of one single trace of depression or discouragement suffered to rest on the apostle's mind. He seems to have been ever fresh and sanguine, the salient energy of his soul rising above the need of all human sympathy. It is the magnificent spectacle of missionary life, with more than missionary loneliness. There is something almost awful in the thought of a man who was so thoroughly in the next world that he needed not the consolations of this world. And yet, observe, there is nothing encouraging for us in this. It is very grand to look upon, very commanding, very full of awe; but it is so much above us, so little like anything human that we know of, that we content ourselves with gazing on him as on the gliding swallow's flight, which we wonder at, but never think of imitating.

Now, let us look at one other feature in St. Paul's character—his superiority to those temptations which are potent with ordinary men. We say nothing of his being above the love of money: of his indifference to a life of comfort and personal indulgence. Those temptations only assail the lower part of our nature; and it is not saintliness to be above these: common excellence is impossible otherwise. But when we come to look for those temptations which master the higher and the nobler man, ambition, jealousy, pride, it is not that we see them conquered by the apostle; they scarcely seem to have even lodged in his bosom at all. It was open to the apostle, if he had felt the ambition, to make for himself a name, to become the leader of a party in Corinth and in the world. And yet remember we not how sternly he put down the thought, and how he laboured to merge his individuality in the Cause, and make himself an equal of inferior men? "Who, then, is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers, servants, by whom ye believed?"

Again, in respect of jealousy. Jealousy seems almost inseparable from human love. It is but the other side of love, the shadow cast by the light when the darker body intervenes. There came to him in prison that most cutting of all news to a minister's heart, that others were trying so supplant him in the affections of his converts. But his was that lofty love which cares less for reciprocation than for the well-being of the objects loved. The rival teachers were teaching from emulation; still they could not but bless by preaching

to his disciples. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, "Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Not a trace of jealousy in these words.

Once more—Degrading things were laid to his charge. The most liberal-minded of mankind was charged with bigotry. The most generous of men was suspected of avarice. If ever pride were venial, it had been then. Yet read through the whole of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, and say if one spark of pride be visible. He might have shut himself up in high and dignified silence. He might have refused to condescend to solicit a renewal of the love which had once grown cold; and yet we look in vain for the symptoms of offended pride. Take this one passage as a specimen. "Behold this third time I am willing to come unto you. . . . and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I am beloved."

In this there is very little encouragement. A man so thoroughly above human resentment, human passions, human weakness, does not seem to us an example. The nearer humanity approaches a perfect standard, the less does it command our sympathy. A man must be weak before we can feel encouraged to attempt what he has done. It is not the Redeemer's sinlessness, nor His unconquerable fidelity to duty, nor His superhuman nobleness, that win our desire to imitate. Rather His tears at the grave of friendship, His shrinking from the sharpness of death;—and the feeling of human doubt

which swept across his soul like a desolation. These make Him one of us, and therefore our example.

And it is on this account that this passage seems to us so full of encouragement. It is the precious picture of a frail and struggling apostle—precious both to the man and to the minister. To the man, because it tells him that what he feels Paul felt, imperfect, feeble, far from what he would wish to be; yet with sanguine hope, expecting progress in the saintly life. Precious to the minister, because it tells him that his very weakness may be subservient to a people's strength. Not in his transcendent gifts—not in his saintly endowments—not even in his apostolic devotedness, is St. Paul so close to our hearts, as when he makes himself one with us, and says, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended." And we know not how otherwise any minister could hope to do good, when he addresses men who are infinitely his superiors in almost everything. We know not how else he could urge on to a sanctity which he has not himself attained: we know not how he could dare to speak severely of weaknesses by which he himself is overpowered, and passions of which he feels himself all the terrible tyranny, if it were not that he expects to have tacitly understood *that* in his own case which the apostle urged in every form of expression: Brethren, be as I am, for I am as ye are—struggling, baffled, but panting for emancipation.

We confine ourselves to two subjects:

I. The apostle's object in this life.

II. The means which he used for attaining it.

I. The apostle's object or aim in this life was "perfection." In the verse before—"Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect."—Perfection was his unreached mark.

And less than this no Christian can aim at. There are given to us "exceeding great and precious promises," that by means of these we might be partakers of the Divine Nature. Not to be equal to the standard of our day, nor even to surpass it. Not to be superior to the men amongst whom we live. Not to forgive those who have little to be forgiven. Not to love our friends—But to be the children of our Father—to be pure even as Christ is pure—to be "perfect even as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect."

It is easily perceivable why this perfection is unattainable in this life. Faultlessness is conceivable, being merely the negation of evil. But perfection is positive, the attainment of all conceivable excellence. It is long as Eternity—expansive as God. Perfection is our mark: yet never will the aim be so true and steady as to strike the golden centre. Perfection of character, yet even to the dying hour, it will be but this, "I count not myself to have apprehended." Christian life is like those questions in mathematics which never can be exactly answered. All you can attain is an approximation to the truth. You may labour on for years and never reach it; yet your labour is not in vain. Every figure you add makes the fraction nearer than the last to the million millionth; and so it is with holiness. Christ is our mark—the perfect standard of God in Christ. But

be as holy as you will, there is a step nearer, and another, and another, and so infinitely on.

To this object the apostle gave himself with singleness of aim. "*This one thing I do.*" The life of man is a vagrant changeful desultoriness; like that of children sporting on an enamelled meadow, chasing now a painted butterfly, which loses its charm by being caught —now a wreath of mist, which falls damp upon the hand with disappointment—now a feather of thistle-down, which is crushed in the grasp. In the midst of all this fickleness, St. Paul had found a purpose to which he gave the undivided energy of his soul. "This one thing I do—I press toward the mark."

This is intelligible enough in the case of a minister; for whether he be in the pulpit or beside a sick man's bed—or furnishing his mind in the study, evidently and unmistakably it is his profession to be doing only one thing. But in the manifold life of the man of the world, and business, it is not so easy to understand how this can be carried out. To answer this, we observe, there is a difference between doing and being. Perfection is being, not doing—it is not to effect an act but to achieve a character. If the aim of life were to do something, then, as in an earthly business, except in doing this one thing the business would be at a standstill. The student is not doing the one thing of student-life when he has ceased to think or read. The labourer leaves his work undone when the spade is not in his hand, and he sits beneath the hedge to rest. But in Christian life, every moment and every act is an opportunity for doing the

one thing of *becoming* Christ-like. Every day is full of a most impressive experience. Every temptation to evil temper which can assail us to-day will be an opportunity to decide the question whether we shall gain the calmness and the rest of Christ, or whether we shall be tossed by the restlessness and agitation of the world. Nay, the very vicissitudes of the seasons, day and night, heat and cold, affecting us variably, and producing exhilaration or depression, are so contrived as to conduce towards the being which we become, and decide whether we shall be masters of ourselves, or whether we shall be swept at the mercy of accident and circumstance, miserably susceptible of merely outward influences. Infinite as are the varieties of life, so manifold are the paths to saintly character; and he who has not found out how directly or indirectly to make everything converge towards his soul's sanctification, has as yet missed the meaning of this life.

In pressing towards this "mark," the apostle attained a prize; and here I offer an observation, which is not one of mere subtlety of refinement, but deeply practical. The mark was perfection of character—the prize was blessedness. But the apostle did not aim at the prize of blessedness: he aimed at the mark of perfectness. In becoming perfect he attained happiness, but his primary aim was not happiness.

We may understand this by an illustration. In student-life there are those who seek knowledge for its own sake, and there are those who seek it for the sake of the prize, and the honour, and the subsequent success

in life that knowledge brings. To those who seek knowledge for its own sake the labour is itself reward. Attainment is the highest reward. Doubtless the prize stimulates exertion; encourages and forms a part of the motive; but only a subordinate one: and knowledge would still have "a price above rubies," if there were no prize at all. They who seek knowledge for the sake of a prize are not genuine lovers of knowledge—they only love the rewards of knowledge: had it no honour or substantial advantage connected with it, they would be indolent.

Applying this to our subject, I say this is a spurious goodness which is good for the sake of reward. The child that speaks truth for the sake of the praise of truth, is not truthful. The man who is honest because honesty is the best policy, has not integrity in his heart. He who endeavours to be humble, and holy, and perfect, in order to win heaven, has only a counterfeit religion. God for His own sake—Goodness because it is good—Truth because it is lovely—this is the Christian's aim. The prize is only an incentive; inseparable from success, but not the aim itself.

With this limitation, however, we remark that it is a Christian duty to dwell much more on the thought of future blessedness than most men do. If ever the apostle's step began to flag, the radiant diadem before him gave new vigour to his heart; and we know how at the close of his career the vision became more vivid and more entrancing. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of glory!" It is our privilege, if we are on our

way to God, to keep steadily before us the thought of Home. Make it a matter of habit. Force yourself at night, alone, in the midst of the world's bright sights, to pause to think of the heaven which is yours. Let it calm you and ennoble you, and give you cheerfulness to endure. It was so that Moses was enabled to live amongst all the fascinations of his courtly life, with a heart unseduced from his laborious destiny. By faith . . . "esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Why? "for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." It was so that our Master strengthened his Human Soul for its sharp earthly endurance. "For the joy that was set before him, He endured the cross, despising the shame." If we would become heavenly-minded, we must let the imagination realize the blessedness to which we are moving on. Let us think much of rest,—the rest which is not of indolence, but of powers in perfect equilibrium. The rest which is deep as summer midnight, yet full of life and force as summer sunshine, the sabbath of Eternity. Let us think of the love of God, which we shall feel in its full tide upon our souls. Let us think of that marvellous career of sublime occupation which shall belong to the spirits of just men made perfect; when we shall fill a higher place in God's universe, and more consciously, and with more distinct insight, co-operate with God in the rule over His Creation. "I press toward the mark—for the prize."

II. We pass to our second topic. The means which

Paul found available for the attainment of Divine and perfect character. His great principle was to forget the things which were behind, and to reach forward to the things which were before. The wisdom of a divine life lies hid in this principle. I shall endeavour to expand the sentiment to make it intelligible.

What are the things behind, which are to be forgotten?

1. If we would progress in Christian life, we must forget the days of innocence that lie behind us. Let not this be misunderstood. Innocent, literally, no man ever is. We come into the world with tendencies to evil; but there was a time in our lives when those were only tendencies. A proneness to sin we had; but we had not yet sinned. The moment had not yet arrived when that cloud settles down upon the heart, which in all of after life is never entirely removed: the sense of guilt, the anguish of lost innocence, the restless feeling of a heart no longer pure. Popularly, we call that innocence; and when men become bitterly aware that early innocence of heart is gone, they feel as if all were lost, and so look back to what they reckon holier days with a peculiar fondness of regret. I believe there is much that is merely feeble and sentimental in this regret. Our early innocence is nothing more than ignorance of evil. Christian life is not a retaining of that ignorance of evil: nor even a returning of it again. We lose our mere negative sinlessness. We put on a firm manly holiness. Human innocence is not to know evil:—Christian saintliness is to know evil and good, and prefer good. It is possible for a parent, with over-fastidious refinement,

to prolong the duration of this innocence unnaturally. He may lock up his library, and prevent the entrance to forbidden books:—he may exercise a jealous censorship over every book and every companion that comes into the house;—he may remove the public journal from the table, lest an eye may chance to rest upon the contaminating portion of its pages; but he has only put off the evil hour. He has sent into the world a young man of eighteen or twenty, ignorant of evil as a child, but not innocent as an angel who abhors the evil. No, we cannot get back our past ignorance, neither is it desirable we should. No sane mind wishes for that which is impossible. And it is no more to be regretted than the blossom is to be regretted when fruit is hardening in its place;—no more to be regretted than the slender gracefulness of the sapling, when you have got instead the woody fibre of the heart of oak of which the ship is made;—no more to be regretted than the green blade when the ear has come instead, bending down in yellow ripeness. Our innocence is gone, withered with the business-like contact with the great world. It is one of the things behind. Forget it. It was worth very little. And now for something of a texture more firm, more enduring. We will not mourn over the loss of simplicity, if we have got instead souls indurated by experience, disciplined, even by fall, to refuse the evil and to choose the good.

2. In the next place, it is wise to forget our days of youth. Up to a certain period of life it is the tendency of man to look forwards. There is a marvellous prodi

gality with which we throw away our present happiness when we are young, which belongs to those who feel that they are rich in happiness, and never expect to be bankrupts. It almost seems one of the signatures of our immortality that we squander time as if there were a dim consciousness that we are in possession of an eternity of it; but as we arrive at middle age, it is the tendency of man to look back. To a man of middle life, existence is no longer a dream, but a reality. He has not much more new to look forward to, for the character of his life is generally fixed by that time. His profession, his home, his occupations, will be for the most part what they are now. He will make few new acquaintances—no new friends. It is the solemn thought connected with middle age that life's last business is begun in earnest; and it is then, midway between the cradle and the grave, that a man begins to look back and marvel with a kind of remorseful feeling that he let the days of youth go by so half-enjoyed. It is the pensive autumn feeling,—it is the sensation of half sadness that we experience when the longest day of the year is past, and every day that follows is shorter, and the lights fainter, and the feebler shadows tell that nature is hastening with gigantic footsteps to her winter grave. So does man look back upon his youth. When the first grey hairs become visible—when the unwelcome truth fastens itself upon the mind, that a man is no longer going up the hill, but down, and that the sun is already westering, he looks back on things behind. Now this is a natural feeling, but is it the high Christian tone

of feeling? In the spirit of this verse, we may assuredly answer, No. We who have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, what have we to do with things past? When we were children we thought as children. But now there lies before us manhood, with its earnest work: and then old age, and then the grave, and then home. And so manhood in the Christian life is a better thing than boyhood, because it is a riper thing; and old age ought to be a brighter, and a calmer, and a more serene thing than manhood. There is a second youth for man, better and holier than his first, if he will look on and not back. There is a peculiar simplicity of heart and a touching singleness of purpose in Christian old age, which has ripened gradually and not fitfully. It is then that to the wisdom of the serpent is added the harmlessness of the dove; it is then that to the firmness of manhood is joined almost the gentleness of womanhood; it is then that the somewhat austere and sour character of growing strength, moral and intellectual, mellows into the rich ripeness of an old age, made sweet and tolerant by experience; it is then that man returns to first principles. There comes a love more pure and deep than the boy could ever feel; there comes a conviction, with a strength beyond that which the boy could ever know, that the earliest lesson of life is infinite, Christ is all in all.

3. Again; it is wise to forget past errors. There is a kind of temperament which, when indulged, greatly hinders growth in real godliness. It is that rueful, repentant, self-accusing temper, which is always looking

back, and microscopically observing how that which is done might have been better done. Something of this we ought to have. A Christian ought to feel always that he has partially failed, but that ought not to be the only feeling. Faith ought ever to be a sanguine, cheerful thing; and perhaps in practical life we could not give a better account of faith than by saying, that it is, amidst much failure, having the heart to *try again.* Our best deeds are marked by imperfection; but if they really were our best, "forget the things that are behind"—we shall do better next time.

Under this head we include all those mistakes which belong to our circumstances. We can all look back to past life and see mistakes that have been made, to a certain extent, perhaps, irreparable ones. We can see where our education was fatally misdirected. The profession chosen for you perhaps was not the fittest, or you are out of place, and many things might have been better ordered. Now, on this apostolic principle, it is wise to forget all that. It is not by regretting what is irreparable that true work is to be done, but by making the best of what we are. It is not by complaining that we have not the right tools, but by using well the tools we have. What we are, and where we are, is God's providential arrangement—God's doing, though it may be man's misdoing; and the manly and the wise way is to look your disadvantages in the face, and see what can be made out of them. Life, like war, is a series of mistakes, and he is not the best Christian nor the best general who makes the fewest false steps. Poor

mediocrity may secure that; but he is the best who wins the most splendid victories by the retrieval of mistakes. Forget mistakes: organize victory out of mistakes.

Finally; Past guilt lies behind us, and is well forgotten. There is a way in which even sin may be banished from the memory. If a man looks forward to the evil he is going to commit, and satisfies himself that it is inevitable, and so treats it lightly, he is acting as a fatalist. But if a man partially does this, looking backward, feeling that sin when it is past has become part of the history of God's universe, and is not to be wept over for ever, he only does that which the Giver of the Gospel permits him to do. Bad as the results have been in the world of making light of sin, those of brooding over it too much have been worse. Remorse has done more harm than even hardihood. It was remorse which fixed Judas in an unalterable destiny; it was remorse which filled the monasteries for ages with men and women whose lives became useless to their fellow-creatures; it is remorse which so remembers bygone faults as to paralyse the energies for doing Christ's work; for when you break a Christian's spirit, it is all over with progress. Oh! we want everything that is hopeful and encouraging for our work, for, God knows, it is not an easy one. And therefore it is that the Gospel comes to the guiltiest of us all at the very outset with the inspiring news of pardon. You remember how Christ treated sin. Sin of oppression and hypocrisy indignantly, but sin of frailty—"'Hath no man condemned thee?' 'No man, Lord.' 'Neither do I

condemn thee; go, and sin no more.'" As if he would bid us think more of what we may be than of what we have been. There was the wisdom of life in the proverb with which the widow of Tekoah pleaded for the restoration of Absolom from banishment before David. Absalom had slain his brother Amnon. Well, Amnon was dead before his time; but the severity of revenge could never bring him back again. "We must all die," said the wise woman, "and are as water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." Christian brethren, *do not stop too long to weep over spilt water.* Forget your guilt, and wait to see what eternity has to say to it. You have other work to do now.

So let us work out the spirit of the apostle's plan. Innocence, youth, success, error, guilt—let us forget them all.

> Not backward are our glances bent,
> But onwards to our Father's home.

In conclusion, remember Christian progress is only possible in Christ. It is a very lofty thing to be a Christian; for a Christian is a man who is restoring God's likeness to his character; and therefore the apostle calls it here a high calling. High as heaven is the calling wherewith we are called. But this very height makes it seem impracticable. It is natural to say—All that was well enough for one so transcendently gifted as Paul to hope for: but I am no gifted man—I have no iron strength of mind—I have no sanguine hopefulness of character—I am disposed to look on the dark side of things—I am undetermined, weak, vacillating;

and then I have a whole army of passions and follies to contend with. We have to remind such men of one thing they have forgotten. It is the high calling of God if you will; but it is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. What the world calls virtue is a name and a dream without Christ. The foundation of all human excellence must be laid deep in the blood of the Redeemer's cross, and in the power of His Resurrection. First let a man know that all his past is wrong and sinful; then let him fix his eye on the love of God in Christ loving him, even him, the guilty one. Is there no strength in that? no power in the knowledge that all that is gone by *is gone*, and that a fresh, clear future is open? It is not the progress of virtue that God asks for, but progress in saintliness, empowered by hope and love.

Lastly, let each man put this question to himself, "Dare I look on?" With an earnest Christian, it is "reaching forth to those things which are before." Progress ever. And then just as we go to rest in this world tired, and wake up fresh and vigorous in the morning, so does the Christian go to sleep in the world's night, weary with the work of life, and then on the resurrection-day he wakes in his second and his brighter morning. It is well for a believer to look on.—Dare you? Remember, out of Christ, it is not wisdom, but madness to look on. You must look back, for the longest and the best day is either past or passing. It will be winter soon—desolate, uncheered, hopeless, winter—old age, with its dreariness and its disappoint-

ments, and its querulous broken-heartedness; and there is no second spring for you—no resurrection morning of blessedness to dawn on the darkness of your grave. God has only one method of salvation, the Cross of Christ. God can have only one; for the Cross of Christ means death to evil, life to good. There is no other way to salvation but that, for that in itself is, and alone is, salvation. Out of Christ, therefore, it is woe to the man who reaches forth to the things which are before. To such I say—My unhappy brethren, Omnipotence itself cannot change the darkness of your destiny.

V.

Preached October 20, 1850.

TRIUMPH OVER HINDRANCES.—ZACCHEUS.

LUKE xix. 8.—"And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold."

THERE are persons to whom a religious life seems smooth and easy. Gifted by God constitutionally with a freedom from those inclinations which in other men are tyrannous and irresistible—endued with those aspirations which other men seem to lack—it appears as if they were born saints.

There are others to whom it is all a trial—a whole world of passions keep up strife within. The name of the Spirit which possesses them is Legion. It is a hard fight from the cradle to the grave—up-hill work—toil all the way; and at the last it seems as if they had only just kept their ground.

There are circumstances which seem as if intended as a very hotbed for the culture of religious principle, in which the difficulty appears to be to escape being religious.

There are others in which religious life seems impossible. For the soul, tested by temptation, is like iron tried by weights. No iron bar is absolutely infrangible. Its strength is tested by the weight which it will bear without breaking. No soul is absolutely impeccable. It seems as if all we can dare to ask even of the holiest is how much temptation he can bear without giving way. There are societies amidst which some are forced to dwell daily, in which the very idea of Christian rest is negatived. There are occupations in which purity of heart can scarcely be conceived. There are temptations to which some are subjected in a long series, in which to have stood upright would have demanded not a man's but an angel's strength.

Here are two cases: one in which temperament and circumstances are favourable to religion: another in which both are adverse. If life were always the brighter side of these pictures, the need of Christian instruction and Christian casuistry—*i. e.*, the direction for conduct under various supposable cases, would be superseded. The end of the institution of a Church would be gone; for the Church exists for the purposes of mutual sympathy and mutual support. But the fact is, life is for the most part a path of varied trial. How to lead the life divine, surrounded by temptations from within and from without—how to breathe freely the atmosphere of heaven, while the feet yet touch earth—how to lead the life of Christ, who shrunk from no scene of trying duty, and took the temptations of man's life as they came; or how even to lead the ordinary saintly life,

winning experience from fall, and permanent strength out of momentary weakness, and victory out of defeat—this is the problem.

The possibility of such a life is guaranteed by the history of Zaccheus. Zaccheus was tempted much, and Zaccheus contrived to be a servant of Christ. If we wanted a motto to prefix to this story, we should append this—The successful pursuit of religion under difficulties.

These, then, are the two branches of our thoughts to-day.

I. The hindrances to a religious life.
II. The Christian triumph over difficulties.

I. The hindrances of Zaccheus were two-fold: Partly circumstantial—partly personal. Partly circumstantial, arising from his riches and his profession of a publican.

Now the publican's profession exposed him to temptation in these three ways. First of all in the way of *opportunity*. A publican was a gatherer of the Roman public imposts. Not however as now, when all is fixed, and the Government pays the gatherer of the taxes. The Roman publican paid so much to the government for the privilege of collecting them; and then indemnified himself, and appropriated what overplus he could from the taxes which he gathered. There was therefore, evidently, a temptation to overcharge, and a temptation to oppress. To overcharge, because the only redress the payer of the taxes had was an appeal to law, in which his chance was small before a tribunal where the judge

was a Roman, and the accuser an official of the Roman Government. A temptation to oppress, because the threat of law was nearly certain to extort a bribe. Besides this, most of us must have remarked that a certain harshness of manner is contracted by those who have the rule over the poor. They come in contact with human souls only in the way of business. They have to do with their ignorance, their stupidity, their attempts to deceive; and hence the tenderest-hearted men become impatient and apparently unfeeling. Hard men, knowing that redress is difficult, become harder still, and exercise their authority with the insolence of office; so that, when to the insolence of office and the likelihood of impunity there was superadded the pecuniary advantage annexed to a tyrannical extortion, any one may understand how great the publican's temptation was.

Another temptation was presented: to live satisfied with a low morality. The standard of right and wrong is eternal in the heavens—unchangeably one and the same. But here on earth it is perpetually variable—it is one in one age or nation, another in another. Every profession has its conventional morality, current nowhere else. That which is permitted by the peculiar standard of truth acknowledged at the bar, is falsehood among plain men — that which would be reckoned in the army purity and tenderness, would be elsewhere licentiousness and cruelty. There is a parliamentary honour quite distinct from honour between man and man. Trade has its honesty; which rightly named is fraud. And in all these cases the temptation is to live content

with the standard of a man's own profession or society; and this is the real difference between the worldly man and the religious man. He is the worldling who lives below that standard, or no higher—he is the servant of God who lives *above* his age. But you will perceive, that amongst publicans a very little would count much —that which would be laxity to a Jew, and shame to a Pharisee, might be reckoned very strict morality among the Publicans.

Again, Zaccheus was tempted to that hardness in evil which comes from having no character to support. But the extent to which sin hardens depends partly on the estimate taken of it by society. The falsehood of Abraham, the guilt and violence of David, were very different in their effect on character in an age when truth and purity and gentleness were scarcely recognised, from what they would be now. Then, Abraham and David had not so sinned against their conscience as a man would sin now in doing the same acts; because their consciences were less enlightened. A man might be a slave-trader in the Western hemisphere, and in other respects a humane, upright, honourable man. In the last century, the holy Newton of Olney trafficked in slaves, after becoming religious. A man who had dealings in this way in this country could not remain upright and honourable, even if it were conceivable that he began as such; because he would either conceal from the world his share in the traffic, and so doing it secretly, would become a hypocrite; or else he must cover his wickedness by effrontery, doing it in defiance

of public shame, and so getting seared in conscience. Because in the one case, the sin, remaining sin, yet countenanced by society, does not degrade the man, nor injure his conscience, even to the same extent to which it would ruin the other, whose conscience must become seared by defiance of public shame. It is scarcely possible to unite together the idea of an executioner of public justice and a humble holy man. And yet assuredly, not from anything that there is unlawful in the office: an executioner's trade is as lawful as a soldier's. A soldier is placed there by his country to slay his country's enemies; and a doomster is placed there to slay the transgressors of his country's laws. Wherein lies the difference which leaves the one a man of honour, and almost necessitates the other to be taken from the rank of reprobates, or else gradually to become such? Simply the difference of public opinion—public scorn. Once there was no shame in the office of the executioner, and the Judge of Israel, with his own hands, hewed Agag to pieces before the Lord in Gilgal. Phinehas executed summary and sanguinary vengeance, and his name has been preserved in a hymn by his country's gratitude. The whole congregation became executioners in the case of blasphemy, and no abandonment was the result. But the voice of public opinion pronouncing an office or a man scandalous, either finds er else makes them what it has pronounced them. The executioner is or becomes an outcast, because reckoned such.

More vile and more degraded than even the execu-

tioner's office with us, was the office of publican among the Jews. A penitent publican could not go to the house of God without the risk of hearing muttered near him the sanctimonious thanksgiving of Pharisaism: "God, I thank Thee that I am not as this publican." A publican, even though high in office, and rich besides, could not receive into his house a teacher of religion without being saluted by the murmurs of the crowd, as in this case: "He is gone to eat with a man that is a sinner." A sinner! The proof of that? The only proof was that he was *a publican*. There are men and women in this congregation who have committed sins that never have been published to the world; and therefore, though they be still untouched by the love of God, they have never sunk down to degradation; whereas the very same sins, branded with public shame, have sunk others not worse than them down to the lowest infamy. There is no principle in education and in life more sure than this—to stigmatize is to ruin: to take away character is to take away all. There is no power committed to man, capable of use and abuse, more certain and more awful than this: "Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them."

This, then, was a temptation arising out of Zaccheus' circumstances—to become quite hardened by having no character to support.

The *personal* hindrance to a religious life lay in the recollection of past guilt. Zaccheus had done wrong, and no fourfold restitution will undo that, where remorse only exists.

There is a difference between remorse and penitence. Remorse is the consciousness of wrong-doing with no sense of love. Penitence is that same consciousness, with the feeling of tenderness and gratefulness added.

And pernicious as have been the consequences of self-righteousness, more destructive still have been the consequences of remorse. If self-righteousness has slain its thousands, remorse has slain its tens of thousands; for, indisputably, self-righteousness secures a man from degradation. Have you never wondered at the sure walk of those persons who, to trust their own estimate of themselves, are always right? They never sin—their children are better brought up than any other children—their conduct is irreproachable. Pride saves them from a fall. That element of self-respect, healthful always, is their safeguard. Yes, the Pharisee was right. He is not an extortioner, nor unjust, and he is regular in his payments and his duties. That was self-righteousness: it kept him from saintliness; but it saved him from degradation too. Remorse, on the contray, crushes. If a man lose the world's respect, he can retreat back upon the consciousness of the God within. But if a man lose his own respect, he sinks down and down, and deeper yet, until he can get it back again by feeling that he is sublimely loved, and he dares at last to respect that which God vouchsafes to care for. Remorse is like the clog of an insoluble debt. The debtor is proverbially extravagant—one more, and one more expense. What can it matter when the great bankruptcy is near? And so, in the same way, one sin, and one more. Why

not? why should he pause when all is hopeless? what is one added to that which is already infinite?

Past guilt becomes a hindrance too in another way—It makes fresh sin easier. Let any one, out of a series of transgressions, compare the character of the first and the last. The first time there was the shudder and the horror, and the violent struggle, and the feeling of impossibility. I cannot—*cannot* do that. The second time there was faint reluctance, made more faint by the recollection of the facility and the pleasantness of the first transgression; and the last time there is neither shudder nor reluctance, but the eager plunge down the precipice on the brink of which he trembled once. All this was against Zaccheus. A publican had lost self-respect, and sin was easy.

II. Pass we on to the triumph over difficulties. In this there is man's part, and God's part.

Man's part in Zaccheus' case was exhibited in the discovery of expedients. The Redeemer came to Jericho, and Zaccheus desired to see that blessed Countenance, whose very looks, he was told, shed peace upon restless spirits and fevered hearts. But Zaccheus was small of stature, and a crowd surrounded him. Therefore he ran before, and climbed up into a sycamore-tree. You must not look on this as a mere act of curiosity. They who thronged the steps of Jesus were a crowd formed of different materials from the crowd which would have been found in the amphitheatre. He was there as a religious Teacher or Prophet; and they who

took pains to see Him, at least were the men who looked for salvation in Israel. This, therefore, was a *religious* act.

We have heard of the "pursuit of knowledge under difficulties." The shepherd, with no apparatus besides his thread and beads, has lain on his back on the starry night, mapped the heavens, and unconsciously become a distinguished astronomer. The peasant boy, with no tools but his rude knife, and a visit now and then to the neighbouring town, has begun his scientific education by producing a watch that would mark the time. The blind man, trampling upon impossibilities, has explored the economy of the beehive, and, more wondrous still, lectured on the laws of light. The timid stammerer, with pebbles in his mouth, and the roar of the sea-surge in his ear, has attained correctest elocution, and swayed as one man the changeful tides of the mighty masses of the Athenian democracy. All these were *expedients*. It is thus in the life religious. No man ever trod exactly the path that others trod before him. There is no exact chart laid down for the voyage. The rocks and quicksands are shifting; he who enters upon the ocean of existence arches his sails to an untried breeze. He is "the first that ever burst into that lonely sea." Every life is a *new* life. Every day is a *new* day—like nothing that ever went before, or can ever follow after. No books—no systems—no forecast—set of rules, can provide for all cases; every case is a new case. And just as in any earthly enterprise, the conduct of a campaign, or the building of a bridge, unforeseen difficulties

and unexpected disasters must be met by that inexhaustible fertility of invention which belongs to those who do not live to God *second-hand*. We must live to God first-hand. If we are in earnest, as Zaccheus was, we must invent peculiar means of getting over peculiar difficulties.

There are times when the truest courage is shown in retreating from a temptation. There are times when, not being on a level with other men in qualifications of temper, mind, character, we must compensate by inventions and Christian expedients. You must climb over the crowd of difficulties which stand between your soul and Christ—you must "run before" and forecast trials, and get into the sycamore solitude. Without a living life like this you will never get a glimpse of the King in his beauty: you will never see it. You will be just on the point of seeing Him, and shut out by some unexpected hindrance.

Observe, again, an illustration of this, Zaccheus' habit of restoration. "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." There are two ways of interpreting this; it may have reference to the future. It commonly is so interpreted. It is supposed that, touched by the love of Christ, Zaccheus proclaimed this as his resolve—I hereby promise to give the half of my goods to the poor. But it is likely that this interpretation has been put upon it in order to make it square with the evangelical order of emotions—Grace first, liberality after. The interpretation seems

rather put on the passage than found there. The word is not future, but singular: Behold, Lord, I give. And it seems more natural to take it as a statement of the habit of Zaccheus' previous life. If so, then all is plain. This man, so maligned, had been leading a righteous life after all, according to the Mosaic standard. On the day of defence he stands forward and vindicates himself from the aspersion. "These are my habits." And the Son of Man vindicates him before all. Yes, publican as he is, he too is a "son of Abraham."

Here then were *expedients* by which he overcame the hindrances of his position. The tendency to the hardness and selfishness of riches he checked by a rule of giving half away. The tendency to extortion he met by fastening on himself the recollection, that when the hot moment of temptation had passed away, he would be severely dealt with before the tribunal of his own conscience, and unrelentingly sentenced to restore fourfold.

God's part in this triumph over difficulties is exhibited in the address of Jesus: "Zaccheus, make haste and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house."

Two things: Invitation and sympathy. Invitation—"come down." Say what we will of Zaccheus seeking Jesus, the truth is Jesus was seeking Zaccheus. For what other reason but the will of God had Jesus come to Jericho, but to seek Zaccheus and such as he? Long years Zaccheus had been living in only a dim consciousness of being a servant of God and goodness. At last the Saviour is born into the world—appears in Judea—comes to Jericho, Zaccheus' town—passes down

Zaccheus' street, and by Zaccheus' house, and up to Zaccheus' person. What is all this but seeking? what the Bible calls election? Now there is a specimen in this of the ways of God with men in this world. We do not seek God—God seeks us. There is a Spirit pervading Time and Space Who seeks the souls of men. At last the seeking becomes reciprocal—the Divine Presence is felt afar, and the soul begins to turn towards it. Then when we begin to seek God, we become conscious that God is seeking us. It is at that period that we distinguish the voice of personal invitation—"Zaccheus!" It is then that the Eternal Presence makes its abode with us, and the hour of unutterable joy begins, when the banquet of Divine Love is spread within the soul, and the Son of God abides there as at a feast. "Behold I stand at the door and knock: If any man hear my voice, I will come in and sup with him, and he with Me."

This is Divine Grace. We are saved by grace, not will. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." In the matter of man's salvation God is first. He comes to us self-invited—He names us by name—He isolates us from the crowd, and sheds upon us the sense of personal recognition—He pronounces the benediction, till we feel that there is a mysterious blessing on our house, and on our meal, and on our heart. This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

Lastly, the Divine part was done in sympathy. By

sympathy we commonly mean little more than condolence. If the tear start readily at the voice of grief, and the purse-strings open at the accents of distress, we talk of a man's having great sympathy. To weep with those who weep:—Common sympathy does not mean much more.

The sympathy of Christ was something different from this. Sympathy to this extent, no doubt, Zaccheus could already command. If Zaccheus were sick, even a Pharisee would have given him medicine. If Zaccheus had been in need, a Jew would not have scrupled to bestow an alms. If Zaccheus had been bereaved, many even of that crowd that murmured when they saw him treated by Christ like a son of Abraham, would have given to his sorrow the tribute of a sigh.

The sympathy of Jesus was fellow-feeling for all that is human. He did not condole with Zaccheus upon his trials,—He did not talk to him "about his soul,"—He did not preach to him about his sins,—He did not force His way into his house to lecture him,—He simply said, "I will abide at thy house:" thereby identifying himself with a publican: thereby acknowledging a publican for a brother. Zaccheus a publican? Zaccheus a sinner? Yes; but Zaccheus is a man. His heart throbs at cutting words. He has a sense of human honour. He feels the burning shame of the world's disgrace. Lost? Yes:—but the Son of Man, with the blood of the human race in His veins, is a Brother to the lost.

It is in this entire and perfect sympathy with all Humanity that the heart of Jesus differs from every

other heart that is found among the sons of men. And it is this—oh! it is this, which is the chief blessedness of having such a Saviour. If you are poor, you can only get a miserable sympathy from the rich; with the best intentions they cannot understand you. Their sympathy is awkward. If you are in pain, it is only a factitious and constrained sympathy you get from those in health—feelings forced, adopted kindly, but imperfect still. They sit, when the regular condolence is done, beside you, conversing on topics with each other that jar upon the ear. *They* sympathise? Miserable comforters are they all. If you are miserable, and tell out your grief, you have the shame of feeling that you were not understood; and that you have bared your inner self to a rude gaze. If you are in doubt, you cannot tell your doubts to religious people; no, not even to the ministers of Christ—for they have no place for doubts in their largest system. They ask, What right have you to doubt? They suspect your character. They shake the head; and whisper it about gravely, that you read strange books—that you are verging on infidelity. If you are depressed with guilt, to whom shall you tell out your tale of shame? The confessional, with its innumerable evils, and yet indisputably soothing power, is passed away; and there is nothing to supply its place. You cannot speak to your brother man, for you injure him by doing so, or else weaken yourself. You cannot tell it to society, for society judges in the gross, by general rules, and cannot take into account the delicate differences of transgression. It banishes the

frail penitent, and does homage to the daring hard transgressor.

Then it is that, repulsed on all sides and lonely, we turn to Him whose mighty Heart understands and feels all. "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." And then it is that, exactly like Zaccheus, misunderstood, suspected by the world, suspected by our own hearts—the very voice of God apparently against us—isolated and apart, we speak to Him from the loneliness of the sycamore-tree, heart to heart, and pulse to pulse. "Lord, Thou knowest all things:" Thou knowest my secret charities, and my untold self-denials. "*Thou* knowest that I love thee."

Remark, in conclusion, the power of this sympathy on Zaccheus' character. Salvation that day came to Zaccheus' house. What brought it? What touched him? Of course, "the gospel." Yes; but what is the gospel? What was his gospel? Speculations or revelations concerning the Divine Nature? The scheme of the atonement? or of the incarnation? or baptismal regeneration? Nay, but the Divine sympathy of the Divinest Man. The personal love of God, manifested in the face of Jesus Christ. The floodgates of his soul were opened, and the whole force that was in the man flowed forth. Whichever way you take that expression, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor:" If it referred to the future, then, touched by unexpected sympathy, finding himself no longer an outcast, he made that resolve in gratefulness. If to the past, then, still touched by sympathy, he who had never

tried to vindicate himself before the world, was softened to tell out the tale of his secret munificence. This is what I have been doing all the time they slandered me, and none but God knew it.

It required something to make a man like that talk of things which he had not suffered his own left hand to know, before a scorning world. But any how, it was the manifested Fellowship of the Son of Man, which brought salvation to that house.

Learn this: When we live the gospel so, and preach the gospel so, sinners will be brought to God. We know not yet the gospel power; for who trusts, as Jesus did, all to that? Who ventures, as He did, upon the power of Love, in sanguine hopefulness of the most irreclaimable? who makes *that*, the divine humility of Christ, "the gospel?" More than by eloquence, more than by accurate doctrine, more than by ecclesiastical order, more than by any doctrine trusted to by the most earnest and holy men, shall we and others, sinful rebels, outcasts, be won to Christ, by that central truth of all the gospel—the entireness of the Redeemer's sympathy. In other words, the Love of Jesus.

VI.

Preached October 28, 1849.

THE SHADOW AND THE SUBSTANCE OF THE SABBATH.

COL. ii. 16, 17.—"Let no man, therefore, judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ."

No sophistry of criticism can explain away the obvious meaning of these words. The apostle speaks of certain institutions as Jewish: shadowy: typical: and among these we are surprised to find the sabbath-days. It has been contended that there is here no allusion to the seventh day of rest, but only to certain Jewish holydays, not of Divine institution. But, in the first place, the "holydays" have been already named in the same verse; in the next we are convinced that no plain man, reading this verse for the first time, without a doctrine to support, would have put such an interpretation upon the word: and we may be sure that St. Paul would never have risked so certain a misconstruction of his words by the use of an ambiguous phrase. This, then, is the first thing we lay down—a very simple

postulate, one would think—when the apostle *says* the sabbath-days, he *means* the sabbath-days.

Peculiar difficulties attend the discussion of the subject of the sabbath. If we take the strict and ultra ground of sabbath observance, basing it on the rigorous requirements of the fourth commandment, we take ground which is not true; and all untruth, whether it be an over-statement or a half-truth, recoils upon itself. If we impose on men a burden which cannot be borne, and demand a strictness which, possible in theory, is impossible in practice, men recoil; we have asked too much, and they give us nothing—the result is an open, wanton, and sarcastic desecration of the Day of Rest.

If, on the other hand, we state the truth, that the sabbath is obsolete—a shadow which has passed—without modification or explanations, evidently there is a danger no less perilous. It is true to spiritual, false to unspiritual men; and a wide door is opened for abuse. And to recklessly loosen the hold of a nation on the sanctity of the Lord's day would be most mischievous—to do so wilfully would be an act almost diabolical. For if we must choose between Puritan over-precision on the one hand, and on the other that laxity which, in many parts of the Continent, has marked the day from other days only by more riotous worldliness, and a more entire abandonment of the whole community to amusement, no Christian would hesitate: no English Christian at least; to whom that day is hallowed by all that is endearing in early associations, and who feels

how much it is the very bulwark of his country's moral purity.

Here, however, as in other cases, it is the half-truth which is dangerous—the other half is the corrective; the whole truth alone is safe. If we say the sabbath is shadow, this is only half the truth. The apostle adds, "the body is of Christ."

There is, then, in the sabbath that which is shadowy and that which is substantial; that which is transient and that which is permanent; that which is temporal and typical, and that which is eternal. The shadow and the body.

Hence, a very natural and simple division of our subject suggests itself.

I. The transient shadow of the sabbath which has passed away.

II. The permanent substance which cannot pass.

I. The transient shadow which has passed away.

The history of the sabbath-day is this. It was given by Moses to the Israelites, partly as a sign between God and them, marking them off from all other nations by its observance; partly as commemorative of their deliverance from Egypt. And the reason why the seventh day was fixed on, rather than the sixth or eighth, was, that on that day God rested from His labour. The soul of man was to form itself on the model of the Spirit of God. It is not said, that God at the creation gave the sabbath to man, but that God rested at the

close of the six days of creation: whereupon He had blessed and sanctified the seventh day to the Israelites. This is stated in the fourth commandment, and also in Gen. i., which was written for the Israelites; and the history of creation naturally and appropriately introduces the reason and the sanction of their day of rest.

Nor is there in the Old Testament a single trace of the observance of the sabbath before the time of Moses. After the Deluge, it is not mentioned in the covenant made with Noah. The first account of it occurs after the Israelites had left Egypt; and the fourth commandment consolidates it into a law, and explains the principle and sanctions of the institution.

The observance of one day in seven, therefore, is purely Jewish. The Jewish obligation to observe it rested on the enactment given by Moses.

The spirit of its observance, too, is Jewish, and not Christian. There is a difference between the spirit of Judaism and that of Christianity. The spirit of Judaism is separation—that of Christianity is permeation. To separate the evil from the good was the aim and work of Judaism:—to sever one nation from all other nations; certain meats from other meat; certain days from other days. Sanctify means to set apart. The very essence of the idea of Hebrew holiness lay in sanctification in the sense of separation.

On the contrary, Christianity is permeation — it permeates all evil with good—it aims at overcoming evil by good—it desires to transfuse the spirit of the day of rest into all other days, and to spread the holiness

of one nation over all the world. To saturate life with God, and the world with Heaven, that is the genius of Christianity.

Accordingly, the observance of the sabbath was entirely in the Jewish spirit. No fire was permitted to be made on pain of death: Exod. xxxv. 3. No food was to be prepared: xvi. 5, 23. "No buying nor selling: Nehem. x. 31. So rigorously was all this carried out, that a man gathering sticks was arraigned before the congregation, and sentenced to death by Moses.

This is Jewish, typical, shadowy;—it is all to pass away. Much already has passed: even those who believe our Lord's day to be the descendant of the sabbath admit this. The day is changed. The first day of the week has taken the place of the seventh. The computation of hours is altered. The Jews reckoned from sunset to sunset—modern Christians reckon from midnight to midnight. The spirit of its observance, too, is altered. No one contends now for Jewish strictness in its details.

Now, observe, all this implies the abrogation of a great deal more—nay, of the whole Jewish sabbath itself. We have altered the day—the computation of the hours—the mode of observance: What remains to keep? Absolutely nothing of the literal portion except one day in seven: and that is abrogated, if the rest be abrogated. For by what right do we say that the order of the day, whether it be the first or the seventh, is a matter of indifference, because only formal, but that the proportion of days, one in seven, instead of one

in eight or nine, is moral, and unalterable? On what intelligible principle do we produce the fourth commandment as binding upon Christians, and abrogate so important a clause of it as, "In it thou shalt do *no manner of work?*" On what self-evident ground is it shown that the Jew might not light a fire, but the Christian may; yet that if the postal arrangements of a country permit the delivery of a letter, it is an infraction of the sabbath?

Unquestionably on no scriptural authority. Let those who demand a strict observance of the letter of scripture remember that the Jewish sabbath is distinctly enforced in the Bible, and nowhere in the Bible repealed. You have changed the seventh day to the first on no clear scriptural permission. Two or three passages tell us that, after the resurrection, the apostles were found together on the first day of the week (which, by the way, may have been Saturday evening after sunset). But it is concluded that therefore *probably* the change was apostolic. You have only a probability to go on—and that probability, except with the aid of tradition, infinitesimally small—for the abrogation of a single iota of the Jewish fourth commandment.

It will be said, however, that works of necessity and works of mercy are excepted by Christ's example.

Tell us, then, ye who are servants of the letter, and yet do not scruple to use a carriage to convey you to some church where a favourite minister is heard, is that a spiritual necessity or a spiritual luxury? Part of the Sunday meal of all of you is the result of a servant's

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work Tell us, then, ye accurate logicians, who say that nothing escapes the rigour of the prohibition—which is not necessary or merciful? Is a hot repast a work of necessity or a work of mercy? Oh! it rouses in every true soul a deep and earnest indignation to hear men who drive their cattle to church on Sundays, because they are too emasculated to trudge through cold and rain on foot, invoke the severity of an insulted Law of the Decalogue on those who provide facilities of movement for such as cannot afford the luxury of a carriage. What, think you, would He who blighted the Pharisees with such burning words, have said, had He been present by, while men, whose servants clean their houses, and prepare their meals, and harness their horses, stand up to denounce the service on some railway by which the poor are helped to health and enjoyment? Hired service for the rich is a necessity—hired service for the poor is a desecration of the sabbath! It is right that a thousand should toil for the few in private! It is past bearing in a Christian country that a few should toil for thousands on the sabbath-day!

There is only this alternative: if the fourth commandment be binding still, that clause is unrepealed—"no manner of work;" and so, too, is that other important part, the sanctification of the seventh day and not the first. If the fourth commandment be not binding in these points, then there is nothing left but the broad, comprehensive ground taken by the apostle. The whole sabbath is a shadow of things to come. In consistency, either hold that none of the formal part is

abrogated, or else all. The whole of the letter of the commandment is moral, or else none.

II. There is, however, in the sabbath a substance, a permanent something—"a body"—which cannot pass away.

"The body is of Christ;" the spirit of Christ is the fulfilment of the law. To have the spirit of Christ is to have fulfilled the law. Let us hear the mind of Christ in this matter.

"The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath." In that principle, rightly understood, lies the clue for the unravelling of the whole matter. The religionists of that day maintained that the necessities of man's nature must give way to the rigour of the enactment; He taught that the enactment must yield to man's necessities. They said that the sabbath was written in the book of the Law; He said that it was written on man's nature, and that the law was merely meant to be in accordance with that nature. They based the obligation to observe the sabbath on the sacredness of an enactment; He on the sacredness of the nature of man.

An illustration will help us to perceive the difference between these two views. A wise physician prescribes a regimen of diet to a palate which has become diseased: he fixes what shall be eaten, the quantity, the hours, and number of times. On what does the obligation to obey rest? On the arbitrary authority of the physician? or on the nature with which that prescription is in

accordance? When soundness and health are restored, the prescription falls into disuse: but the nature remains unalterable, which has made some things nutritious, others unwholesome, and excess for ever pernicious. Thus the spirit of the prescription may be still in force when the prescriptive authority is repealed.

So Moses prescribed the sabbath to a nation spiritually diseased. He gave the regimen of rest to men who did not feel the need of spiritual rest. He fenced round his rule with precise regulations of detail—one day in seven, no work, no fire, no traffic. On what does the obligation to obey it rest? On the authority of the rule? or on the necessities of that nature for which the rule was divinely adapted? Was man made for the sabbath, to obey it as a slave? or, Was the sabbath made for man? And when spiritual health has been restored, the Law regulating the details of rest may become obsolete; but the nature which demands rest never can be reversed.

Observe, now, that this is a far grander, safer, and more permanent basis on which to rest the sabbath than the mere enactment. For if you allege the fourth commandment as your authority, straightway, you are met by the objection "no *manner* of work." Who gave you leave to alter that? And if you reply, works of necessity and works of mercy I may do, for Christ excepted these from the stringency of the rule, again the rejoinder comes, is there one in ten of the things that all Christians permit as lawful, really a matter of necessity?

Whereas, if the sabbath rest on the needs of human

nature, and we accept His decision that the sabbath was made for *man*, then you have an eternal ground to rest on from which you cannot be shaken. A son of man may be lord of the sabbath-day, but he is not lord of his own nature. He cannot make one hair white or black. You may abrogate the formal Rule, but you cannot abrogate the needs of your own soul. Eternal as the constitution of the soul of man is the necessity for the existence of a day of rest. Further, still, on this ground alone can you find an impregnable defence of the *proportion*, one day in seven: On the other ground it is unsafe. Having altered the seventh to the first, I know not why one in seven might not be altered to one in ten. The thing, however, has been tried; and by the necessities of human nature the change has been found pernicious. One day in ten, prescribed by revolutionary France, was actually pronounced by physiologists insufficient. So that we begin to find that, in a deeper sense than we at first suspected, "the sabbath was made for man." Even in the contrivance of one day in seven, it was arranged by unerring wisdom. Just because the sabbath was made for man, and not because man was ordained to keep the sabbath-day, you cannot tamper even with the iota, one day in seven.

That necessity on which the observance leans is the need of Rest. It is the deepest want in the soul of man. If you take off covering after covering of the nature which wraps him round, till you come to the central heart of hearts, deep lodged there you find the requirement of Repose. All men do not hanker after pleasure—

all men do not crave intellectual food. But all men long for rest; the most restless that ever pursued a turbulent career on earth did by that career only testify to the need of the soul within. They craved for something which was not given: there was a thirst which was not slaked: their very restlessness betokened that —restless because not at rest. It is this need which sometimes makes the quiet of the grave an object of such deep desire. "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest." It is this which creates the chief desirableness of Heaven: "There remaineth a rest for the people of God." And it is this which, consciously or unconsciously, is the real wish that lies at the bottom of all others.—Oh! for tranquillity of heart—Heaven's profound silence in the soul, "a meek and quiet spirit, which in the sight of God is of great price!".

The rest needed by man is twofold. Physical repose of the body—a need which he shares with the animals through the lower nature which he has in common with them. "Thou shalt do no work, nor thy cattle,"—so far man's sabbath-need places him only on a level with the ox and and with the ass.

But, besides this, the rest demanded is a repose of spirit. Between these two kinds of rest there is a very important difference. Bodily repose is simply inaction: the rest of the soul is exercise, not torpor. To do nothing is physical rest—to be engaged in full activity is the rest of the soul.

In that hour, which of all the twenty-four is most

emblematical of heaven, and suggestive of repose, the eventide, in which instinctively Jacob went into the fields to meditate—when the work of the day is done, when the mind has ceased its tension, when the passions are lulled to rest in spite of themselves, by the spell of the quiet star-lit sky—it is then, amidst the silence of the lull of all the lower parts of our nature, that the soul comes forth to do its work. Then the peculiar, strange work of the soul, which the intellect cannot do —meditation, begins. Awe, and worship, and wonder are in full exercise; and Love begins then in its purest form of mystic adoration and pervasive and undefined tenderness—separate from all that is coarse and earthly —swelling as if it would embrace the All in its desire to bless, and lose itself in the sea of the love of God. This is the Rest of the soul—the *exercise* and play of all the nobler powers.

Two things are suggested by this thought.

First, the mode of the observance of the day of Rest. It has become lately a subject of very considerable attention. Physiologists have demonstrated the necessity of cessation from toil: they have urged the impossibility of perpetual occupation without end. Pictures, with much pathos in them, have been placed before us, describing the hard fate of those on whom no sabbath dawns. It has been demanded as a right, entreated as a mercy, on behalf of the labouring man, that he should have one day in seven for recreation of his bodily energies. All well and true. But there is a great deal more than this. He who confines his conception of the need of rest to

that, has left man on a level with the brutes. Let a man take merely lax and liberal notions of the fourth commandment—let him give his household and dependants immunity from toil, and wish for himself and them no more—he will find that there is a something wanting still. Experience tells us, after a trial, that those Sundays are the happiest, the purest, the most rich in blessing, in which the spiritual part has been most attended to;—those in which the business letter was put aside till evening, and the profane literature not opened, and the ordinary occupations entirely suspended;—those in which, as in the temple of Solomon, the sound of the earthly hammer has not been heard in the temple of the soul: for this is, in fact, the very distinction between the spirit of the Jewish sabbath and the spirit of the Christian Lord's day. The one is chiefly for the body—"Thou shalt do no manner of work." The other is principally for the soul—"I was in the spirit on the Lord's day."

The other truth suggested by that fact, that the repose of the soul is exercise, not rest, is, that it conveys an intimation of man's immortality. It is only when all the rest of our human nature is calmed that the spirit comes forth in full energy: all the rest tires, the spirit never tires. Humbleness, awe, adoration, love, these have in them no weariness: so that when this frame shall be dissolved into the dust of the earth, and the mind, which is merely fitted for this time world, learning by experience, shall have been superseded, then, in the opening out of an endless career of love, the spirit will

enter upon that sabbath of which all earthly sabbaths are but the shadow, the sabbath of Eternity, the immortal Rest of its Father's Home.

Two observations in concluding.

1. When is a son of man lord of the sabbath-day? To whom may the sabbath safely become a shadow? I reply, he that has the mind of Christ may exercise discretionary lordship over the sabbath-day. He who is in possession of the substance may let the shadow go. A man in health has done with the prescriptions of the physician. But for an unspiritual man to regulate his hours and amount of rest by his desires, is just as preposterous as for an unhealthy man to rule his appetites by his sensations. Win the mind of Christ—be like Him—and then, in the reality of Rest in God, the sabbath form of rest will be superseded. Remain apart from Christ, and then you are under the law again—the fourth commandment is as necessary for you as it was for the Israelite: the prescriptive regimen which may discipline your soul to a sounder state. It is at his peril that the worldly man departs from the *rule* of the day of rest. Nothing can make us free from the law but the Spirit.

2. The rule pronounced by the apostle is a rule of liberty, and at the same time a rule of charity: "Let no man judge you in respect of the sabbath-days." It is very difficult to discuss this question of the sabbath. Heat, vehemence, acrimony, are substituted for argument. When you calmly ask to investigate the subject, men apply epithets, and call them reasons:—they

stigmatise you as a breaker of the sabbath, pronounce you "dangerous;" with sundry warnings against you in private, and pregnant hints in public.

The apostle urges charity: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another man esteemeth every day alike." . . . . "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it to the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he regardeth it not." Carry out that spirit. In the detail of this question there is abundant difficulty. It is a question of degree. Some work must be done on the sabbath-day:—some must sacrifice their rest to the rest of others; for all human life is sacrifice, voluntary or involuntary.

Again, that which is rest to one man is not rest to another. To require the illiterate man to read his Bible for some hours would impose a toil upon him, though it might be a relaxation to you. To the labouring man a larger proportion of the day must be given to the recreation of his physical nature than is necessary for the man of leisure, to whom the spiritual observance of the day is easy, and seems all. Let us learn large, charitable considerateness. Let not the poor man sneer at his richer neighbour, if, in the exercise of his Christian liberty, he uses his horses to convey him to church and not to the mere drive of pleasure; but then, in fairness, let not the rich man be shocked and scandalized if the over-wearied shopkeeper and artisan breathe the fresh air of heaven with their families in the country. "The sabbath was made for man." Be generous, consistent, large minded. A man may hold stiff, precise Jewish

notions on this subject; but do not stigmatise that man as a formalist. Another may hold large, Paul-like views of the abrogation of the fourth commandment, and yet he may be sincerely and zealously anxious for the hallowing of the day in his household and through his country. Do not call that man a sabbath-breaker. Remember, the Pharisees called the Son of God a sabbath-breaker. They kept the law of the sabbath—they broke the law of love. Which was the worst to break? which was the higher law to keep? Take care lest, in the zeal which seems to you to be for Christ, ye be found indulging their spirit, and not His.

VII.

Preached November 4, 1849.

THE SYMPATHY OF CHRIST.

HEB. iv. 15, 16.—"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

ACCORDING to these verses, the Priesthood of Jesus Christ is based upon the perfection of His Humanity. Because tempted in all points like as we are, therefore He can show mercy, and grant help. Whatever destroys the conception of His Humanity does in that same degree overthrow the notion of His Priesthood.

Our subject is the Priestly Sympathies of Christ. But we make three preliminary observations.

The perfection of Christ's Humanity implies that He was possessed of a human soul as well as a human body. There was a view, held in early times, and condemned by the Church as a heresy, according to which the body of Christ was an external framework animated by Deity, as our bodies are animated by our souls. What the soul is to us Deity was to Christ. His body was flesh,

blood, bones,—moved, guided, ruled by indwelling Divinity.

But you perceive at once that this destroys the notion of complete humanity. It is not this tabernacle of material elements which constitutes our humanity: you cannot take the pale corpse from which life has fled, and call *that* Man. And if Deity were to take up that form and make it its abode, that would not be an union of the Divine and Human. It would only be the union of Deity with certain materials, that might have passed into man, or into an animal, or a herb. Humanity implies a body and a soul.

Accordingly, in the life of Christ we find two distinct classes of feeling. When He hungered in the wilderness —when He thirsted on the cross—when He was weary by the well at Sychar,—He experienced sensations which belong to the bodily department of human nature. But when out of twelve He selected one to be His bosom friend, when He looked round upon the crowd in anger, when the tears streamed down His cheeks at Bethany, and when He recoiled from the thought of approaching dissolution, these—grief, friendship, fear,—were not the sensations of the body, much less were they the attributes of Godhead. They were the affections of an acutely sensitive human soul, alive to all the tenderness, and hopes, and anguish with which human life is filled, qualifying Him to be tempted *in all* points like as we are.

The second thought which presents itself is, that the Redeemer not only was but *is* man. He *was* tempted

in all points like us. He *is* a high priest which can be touched. Our conceptions on this subject, from being vague, are often very erroneous. It is fancied that in the history of Jesus' existence, once, for a limited period and for definite purposes, He took part in frail humanity; but that when that purpose was accomplished, the Man for ever perished, and the Spirit reascended, to unite again with pure unmixed Deity. But Scripture has taken peculiar pains to give assurance of the continuance of His Humanity. It has carefully recorded His resurrection. After that He passed through space from spot to spot: when He was in one place, He was not in another. His body was sustained by the ordinary aliments: broiled fish and honeycomb. The prints of suffering were on Him. His recognitions were human still. Thomas and Peter were especially reminded of incidents before His death, and connected with His living interests. To Thomas—"Reach hither thy hand." To Peter—"Lovest thou me?"

And this typifies to us a very grand and important truth. It is this, if I may venture to so express myself—the truth of the Human Heart of God. We think of God as a Spirit, infinitely removed from and unlike the creatures He has made. But the truth is, man resembles God: all spirits, all minds are of the same family. The Father bears a likeness to the Son whom He has created. The mind of God is similar to the mind of man. Love does not mean one thing in man, and another thing in God. Holiness, Justice, Pity, Tenderness—these are in the Eternal the same in kind which they are in the

Finite Being. The present Manhood of Christ conveys this deeply important truth, that the Divine Heart is human in its sympathies.

The third observation upon these verses is, that there is a connection between what Jesus was and what Jesus is. He can be touched now, *because* He was tempted then. The incidents and the feelings of that part of the existence which is gone have not passed away without results which are deeply entwined with His present being. His past experience has left certain effects durable in His nature as it is now. It has endued Him with certain qualifications and certain susceptibilities, which He would not have had but for that experience. Just as the results remained upon His body, the prints of the nails in His palms, and the spear-gash in His side, so do the results remain upon His soul, enduing Him with a certain susceptibility, for He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities: with certain qualifications, for He is able to show mercy, and to impart grace to help in time of need.

To turn now to the subject itself. It has two branches.

I. The Redeemer's preparation for his priesthood.
II. The Redeemer's priestly qualifications.

I. His preparation.

The preparation consisted in being tempted. But here a difficulty arises. Temptation, as applied to a Being perfectly free from tendencies to evil, is not easy to understand. See what the difficulty is. Temptation

has two senses: It means test or probation: it means also trial, involving the idea of pain or danger. A common acid applied to gold, tests it: but there is no risk or danger to the most delicate golden ornament. There is one acid, and only one, which tries it, as well as tests it. The same acid applied to a shell endangers the delicacy of its surface. A weight hung from a bar of iron only tests its strength; the same, depending from a human arm, is a trial, involving it may be the risk of pain or fracture. Now, trial placed before a sinless being is intelligible enough in the sense of probation: it is a test of excellence: but it is not easy to see how it can be temptation in the sense of pain, if there be no inclination to do wrong.

However, Scripture plainly asserts this as the character of Christ's temptation. Not merely test, but trial.

First, you have passages declaring the immaculate nature of His mind; as here, "without sin." Again, He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." And again, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me." The spirit of evil found nothing which it could claim as its own in Christ. It was the meeting of two elements which will not amalgamate. Oil and water could as easily blend, as the mind of Christ with evil. Temptation glanced from His heart as the steel point does from the surface of the diamond. It was not that evil propensities were kept under by the power of the Spirit in Him:—He had no evil propensities at all. Obedience was natural to Him.

But then we find another class of passages, such as this: "He *suffered*, being tempted." There was not merely test in the temptation, but there was also painfulness in the victory. How could this be without any tendency to evil?

To answer this, let us analyse sin. In every act of sin there are two distinct steps: There is the rising of a desire which is natural, and, being natural, is not wrong:—there is the indulgence of that desire in forbidden circumstances; and that is sin. Let injury, for example, be inflicted, and resentment will arise. It must arise spontaneously. It is as impossible for injustice to be done, and resentment not to follow, as it is for the flesh not to quiver on the application of intense torture. Resentment is but the sense of injustice, made more vivid by its being brought home to ourselves:—resentment is beyond our control, so far. There is no sin in this: but let resentment rest there; let it pass into, not justice, but revenge—let it smoulder in vindictive feeling till it becomes retaliation, and then a natural feeling has grown into a transgression. You have the distinction between these two things clearly marked in Scripture. "Be ye angry"—here is the allowance for the human, "and sin not"—here is the point where resentment passes into retaliation.

Take, again, the natural sensation of hunger. Let a man have been without food: let the gratification present itself, and the natural desire will arise involuntarily. It will arise just as certainly in a forbidden as in a permitted circumstance. It will arise whether what he

looks on be the bread of another or his own. And it is not here, in the sensation of hunger, that the guilt lies. But it lies in the wilful gratification of it after it is known to be forbidden.

This was literally one of the cases in which Christ was tried. The wish for food was in His nature in the wilderness. The very mode of gratifying it was presented to His imagination: by using Divine power in an unlawful way. And had He so been constituted that the lower wish was superior to the higher will, there would have been an act of sin; had the two been nearly balanced, so that the conflict hung in doubt, there would have been a tendency to sin: what we call a sinful nature. But it was in the entire and perfect subjugation of desire to the will of Right that a sinless nature was exhibited.

Here, then, is the nature of sin. Sin is not the possession of desires; but the having them in uncontrolled ascendancy over the higher nature. Sinfulness does not consist in having *strong* desires or passions: in the strongest and highest natures, all, including the desires, is strong. Sin is not a real *thing*. It is rather the absence of a something, the will to do right. It is not a disease or taint, an actual substance projected into the constitution. It is the absence of the spirit which orders and harmonizes the whole; so that what we mean when we say the natural man must sin inevitably is this, that he has strong natural appetites, and that he has no bias from above to counteract those appetites: exactly as if a ship were deserted by her crew, and

left on the bosom of the Atlantic with every sail set and the wind blowing. No one forces her to destruction—yet on the rocks she will surely go, just because there is no pilot at the helm. Such is the state of ordinary men. Temptation leads to fall. The gusts of instincts, which, rightly guided, would have carried safely into port, dash them on the rocks. No one forces them to sin; but the spirit-pilot has left the helm.—Fallen Nature.

Sin, therefore, is not in the appetites, but in the absence of a controlling Will.

Now, contrast this state with the state of Christ. There were in Him all the natural appetites of mind and body. Relaxation and friendship were dear to Him —so were sunlight and life. Hunger—pain—death— He could feel all, and shrunk from them. Conceive then a case in which the gratification of any one of these inclinations was inconsistent with His Father's will. At one moment it was unlawful to eat, though hungry: and without one tendency to disobey, did fasting cease to be severe? It was demanded that He should endure anguish; and willingly as He subdued Himself, did pain cease to be pain? Could the spirit of obedience reverse every feeling in human nature? When the brave man gives his shattered arm to the surgeon's knife: will may prevent even the quiver of an eyelid; but no will and no courage can reverse his sensations, or prevent the operation from inflicting pain. When the heart is raw, and smarting from recent bereavement, let there be the deepest and most reverential submission to

the Highest Will, is it possible not to wince? Can any cant demand for submission, extort the profession that pain is pleasure?

It seems to have been in this way that the temptation of Christ caused suffering. He suffered from the force of desire. Though there was no hesitation whether to obey or not, no strife in the will, in the act of mastery there was pain. There was self-denial:—there was obedience at the expense of tortured natural feeling. He shrunk from St. Peter's suggestion of escape from ignominy as from a thing which did not shake His determination, but made Him feel, in the idea of bright life, vividly the cost of His resolve. "Get thee behind me, Tempter, for thou art an offence." In the garden, unswervingly: "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." No reluctance in the *will*. But was there no struggling? No shudder in the inward sensations? No remembrance that the Cross was sharp? No recollection of the family at Bethany, and the pleasant walk, and the dear companionship which he was about to leave? "My soul is exceeding sorrowful to die." . . . .

So that in every one of these cases—not by the reluctancy of a sinful sensation, but by the quivering and the anguish of natural feeling when it is trampled upon by lofty will—Jesus *suffered*, being tempted. He was "tempted like as we are." Remember this. For the way in which some speak of the sinlessness of Jesus, reduces all His suffering to physical pain, destroys the reality of temptation, reduces that glorious heart to a pretence, and converts the whole of His history into a

mere fictitious drama, in which scenes of trial were represented, not felt.

Remember that, "in all points," the Redeemer's *soul* was tempted.

II. The second point we take is the Redeemer's Priesthood.

Priesthood is that office by which He is the medium of union between man and God. The capacity for this has been indelibly engraven on His nature by His experience here. All this capacity is based on His sympathy:—He can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities."

Till we have reflected on it, we are scarcely aware how much the sum of human happiness in the world is indebted to this one feeling—sympathy. We get cheerfulness and vigour, we scarcely know how or when, from mere association with our fellow-men; and from the looks reflected on us of gladness and employment, we catch inspiration and power to go on, from human presence and from cheerful looks. The workman works with added energy from having others by. The full family circle has a strength and a life peculiarly its own. The substantial good and the effectual relief which men extend to one another is trifling. It is not by these, but by something far less costly, that the work is done. God has ensured it by a much more simple machinery. He has given to the weakest and the poorest, power to contribute largely to the common stock of gladness. The child's smile and laugh are

mighty powers in this world. When bereavement has left you desolate, what substantial benefit is there which makes condolence acceptable? It cannot replace the loved ones you have lost. It can bestow upon you nothing permanent. But a warm hand has touched yours, and its thrill told you that there was a living response there to your emotion. One look—one human sigh, has done more for you than the costliest present could convey.

And it is for want of remarking this, that the effect of public charity falls often so far short of the expectations of those who give. The springs of men's generosity are dried up by hearing of the repining, and the envy and the discontent which have been sown by the general collection and the provision establishment among cottages where all was harmony before. The famine and the pestilence are met by abundant liberality; and the apparent return for this is riot and sedition. But the secret lies all in this. It is not in channels such as these that the heart's gratitude can flow. Love is not bought by money, but by love. There has been all the machinery of a public distribution: but there has been no exhibition of individual, personal interest. The rich man who goes to his poor brother's cottage, and without affectation of humility, naturally, and with the respect which man owes to man, enters into his circumstances, inquiring about his distresses, and hears his homely tale, has done more to establish an interchange of kindly feeling than he could have secured by the costliest present, by itself. Public donations have their

value and their uses. Poor-laws keep human beings from starvation: but in the point of eliciting gratitude, all these fail. Man has not been brought into contact close enough with man for this. They do not work by sympathy.

Again, when the electric touch of sympathetic feeling has gone among a mass of men, it communicates itself, and is reflected back from every individual in the crowd, with a force exactly proportioned to their numbers. The speech or sermon read before the limited circle of a family, and the same discourse uttered before closely crowded hundreds, are two different things. There is strange power even in the mere presence of a common crowd, exciting almost uncontrollable emotion.

It is on record that the hard heart of an oriental conqueror was unmanned by the sight of a dense mass of living millions engaged in one enterprise. He accounted for it by saying, that it suggested to him that within a single century not one of those millions would be alive. But the hard-hearted bosom of the tyrant mistook its own emotions: his tears came from no such far-fetched inference of reflection: they rose spontaneously, as they will rise in a dense crowd, you cannot tell why. It is the thrilling thought of numbers engaged in the same object. It is the idea of our own feelings reciprocated back to us, and reflected from many hearts. It is the mighty presence of Life.

And, again, it seems partly to avail itself of this tendency within us, that such stress is laid on the injunction of united prayer. Private devotion is essential

to the spiritual life—without it there is no life. But it cannot replace united prayer: for the two things have different aims. Solitary prayer is feeble in comparison with that which rises before the throne echoed by the hearts of hundreds, and strengthened by the feeling that other aspirations are mingling with our own. And whether it be the chanted litany, or the more simply read service, or the anthem producing one emotion at the same moment in many bosoms, the value and the power of public prayer seem chiefly to depend on this mysterious affection of our nature—sympathy.

And now, having endeavoured to illustrate this power of sympathy, it is for us to remember that of this in its fulness He is susceptible. There is a vague way of speaking of the Atonement which does not realize the tender, affectionate, personal love by which that daily, hourly reconciliation is effected. The sympathy of Christ was not merely love of men in masses: He loved the masses, but he loved them because made up of individuals. He "had compassion on the multitude;" but He had also discriminating, special tenderness for erring Peter and erring Thomas. He felt for the despised lonely Zaccheus in his sycamore-tree. He compassionated the discomfort of His disciples. He mixed His tears with the stifled sobs by the grave of Lazarus. He called the abashed children to His side. Amongst the numbers, as He walked, He detected the individual touch of faith. "Master, the multitude throng thee, and sayest thou, *Who* touched me?"—"Somebody hath touched me."

Observe, how He is *touched* by our infirmities—with a separate, special, discriminating love. There is not a single throb, in a single human bosom, that does not thrill at once with more than electric speed up to the mighty heart of God. *You* have not shed a tear or sighed a sigh, that did not come back to you exalted and purified by having passed through the Eternal bosom.

The priestly powers conveyed by this faculty of sympathising, according to the text, are two—The power of mercy: and the power of having grace to help. "Therefore"—because He can be touched—"let us come boldly," expecting mercy—and grace.

1. We may boldly expect mercy from Him who has learned to sympathise. He learned sympathy by being tempted: but it is by being tempted, *yet without sin*, that He is specially able to show mercy.

There are two who are unfit for showing mercy:—He who has never been tried; and he who, having been tempted, has fallen under temptation. The young, untempted, and upright, are often severe judges. They are for sanguinary punishment: they are for expelling offenders from the bosom of society. The old, on the contrary, who have fallen much, are lenient: but it is a leniency which often talks thus: Men must be men—a young man must sow his wild oats and reform.

So young ardent Saul, untried by doubt, persecuted the Christians with severity; and Saul the King, on the contrary, having fallen himself, weakly permitted Agag to escape punishment. David, again, when his

own sin was narrated to him under another name, was unrelenting in his indignation: "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die."

None of these were qualified for showing mercy aright. Now this qualification "without sin," is very remarkable: for it is the one we often least should think of. Unthinkingly we should say that to have erred would make a man lenient:—it is not so.

That truth is taught with deep significance in one of the incidents of the Redeemer's life. There stood in His presence a tempted woman, covered with the confusion of recent conviction. And there stood beside her the sanctimonious religionists of that day, waiting like hell-hounds to be let loose upon their prey. Calm words came from the lips of Him "who spake as man never spake," and whose heart felt as man never felt. "He that is without sin among you let him first cast a stone." A memorable lesson of eternal truth. Sinners are not fit to judge of sin:—their justice is revenge—their mercy is feebleness. He alone can judge of sin—he alone can attemper the sense of what is due to the offended Law with the remembrance of that which is due to human frailty—he alone is fit for showing manly mercy, who has, like his Master, felt the power of temptation in its might, and come scathless through the trial.

"In all points tempted—*yet without sin;*" therefore, to Him you may "boldly go to find mercy."

2. The other priestly power is the grace of showing "help in time of need."

We must not make too much of sympathy, as mere feeling. We do in things spiritual as we do with hothouse plants. The feeble exotic, beautiful to look at, but useless, has costly sums spent on it. The hardy oak, a nation's strength, is permitted to grow, scarcely observed, in the fence and copses. We prize feeling and praise its possessor. But feeling is only a sickly exotic in itself—a passive quality, having in it nothing moral, no temptation and no victory. A man is no more a good man for having feeling, than he is for having a delicate ear for music, or a far-seeing optic nerve. The Son of man had feeling—He could be "touched."—The tear would start from His eyes at the sight of human sorrow. But that sympathy was no exotic in His soul, beautiful to look at, too delicate for use. Feeling with Him led to this, "He went about doing good." Sympathy with Him was this, "Grace to help in time of need."

And this is the blessing of the thought of Divine sympathy. By the sympathy of man, after all, the wound is not healed: it is only stanched for a time. It can make the tear flow less bitterly: it cannot dry it up. So far as permanent good goes, who has not felt the deep truth which Job taught his friends—"Miserable comforters are ye all?"

The sympathy of the Divine Human! He knows what strength is needed. He gives grace to help; and when the world, with its thousand forms of temptation, seems to whisper to us as to Esau, Sell me thy birthright, the other voice speaks, Shall I barter blessedness

for happiness? the inward peace for the outward thrill? the benediction of my Father for a mess of pottage? There are moments when we seem to tread above this earth, superior to its allurements, able to do without its kindness, firmly bracing ourselves to do our work as He did His. Those moments are not the sunshine of life. They did not come when the world would have said that all round you was glad: but it was when outward trials had shaken the soul to its very centre, then there came from Him . . . "Grace to help in time of need."

From this subject, I draw, in concluding, two inferences.

1. He who would sympathise must be content to be tried and tempted. There is a hard and boisterous rudeness in our hearts by nature, which requires to be softened down. We pass by suffering gaily, carelessly, not in cruelty, but unfeelingly, just because we do not know what suffering is. We wound men by our looks and our abrupt expressions without intending it, because we have not been taught the delicacy, and the tact, and the gentleness which can only be learnt by the wounding of our own sensibilities. There is a haughty feeling in uprightness which has never been on the verge of fall, that requires humbling. There is an inability to enter into difficulties of thought, which marks the mind to which all things have been presented superficially, and which has never experienced the horror of feeling the ice of doubt crashing beneath the feet.

Therefore, if you aspire to be a son of consolation—if you would partake of the priestly gift of sympathy—

if you would pour something beyond common-place consolation into a tempted heart—if you would pass through the intercourse of daily life, with the delicate tact which never inflicts pain—if to that most acute of human ailments, mental doubt, you are ever to give effectual succour, you must be content to pay the price of the costly education. Like Him, you must suffer—being tempted.

But remember, it is being tempted in all points, *yet without* sin, that makes sympathy real, manly, perfect, instead of a mere sentimental tenderness. Sin will teach you to *feel* for trials. It will not enable you to judge them; to be merciful to them—nor to help them in time of need with any certainty.

Lastly, it is this same human sympathy which qualifies Christ for judgment. It is written that the Father hath committed all judgment to Him, *because* He is the Son of Man. The sympathy of Christ extends to the frailties of human nature; not to its hardened guilt: He is "touched with the feeling of our *infirmities*." There is nothing in His bosom which can harmonize with malice—He cannot feel for envy—He has no fellow-feeling for cruelty: oppression: hypocrisy; bitter censorious judgments. Remember, He could look round about Him with anger. The sympathy of Christ is a comforting subject. It is, besides, a tremendous subject; for on sympathy the awards of heaven and hell are built. "Except a man be born again"—not he *shall* not, but—"he *cannot* enter into heaven." There is nothing in him which has affinity to anything in the

Judge's bosom. A sympathy for that which is pure implies a repulsion of that which is impure. Hatred of evil is in proportion to the strength of love for good. To love good intensely, is to hate evil intensely. It was in strict accordance with the laws of sympathy that He blighted Pharisaism in such ungentle words as these; "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Win the mind of Christ now—or else His sympathy for human nature will not save you from, but only ensure, the recoil of abhorrence at the last—"Depart from me! I never knew you."

VIII.

Preached November 11, 1849.

THE PHARISEES AND SADDUCEES AT JOHN'S BAPTISM.

MATT. iii. 7.—"But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

IT seems that the Baptist's ministry had been attended with almost incredible success, as if the population of the country had been roused in mass by the tidings of his doctrine. "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were baptized by him in Jordan, confessing their sins."

The success of his ministry was tested by the numbers that he baptized. Not so a modern ministry. Ministerial success is not shown now by the numbers who listen. Not impression, but altered character, marks success. Not by startling, nor by electrifying, congregations, but by turning men from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God, is the work done. With John, however, it was different. He was on earth to do a special work—the work of the axe, not the trowel; to throw down, not to build; to startle,

not to instruct; and therefore his baptism was simply symbolized by water, the washing away of the past: whereas that of Christ was symbolized by fire, the touching of the life and heart with the living flame of a heavenlier life. Whoever, therefore, came to John for baptism, possessed conviction of the truth of that which John taught, and thereby so far tested the fidelity and success of his ministry.

Bearing, then, in mind, that coming to John's baptism was the seal of his success, and that his baptism contained, in symbolical form, the whole substance of his teaching, these are the two topics of the text:—

I. The meaning wrapped up in John's message.
II. The Baptist's astonishment at his own success.

I. The meaning of John's message. His baptism implied to those who came to put themselves under its protection that they were in danger, for it was connected with the warning, "Flee from the wrath to come!"

Future retribution has become to us a kind of figment. Hell is in the world of shadows. The tone in which educated men speak of it still, is often only that good-humoured condescension which makes allowance for childish superstition.

Part of this incredulity arises from the confessedly symbolical intimations of Scripture on the subject. We read of the fire and the worm: of spirits being salted with fire: of a lake of fire and brimstone. All this tells solely of physical suffering. And accordingly, for

centuries, this was the predominant conception of Christendom on the subject. Scarcely any other element was admitted. Whoever has seen those paintings on which the master-spirits have thrown down the conceptions of their age, will remember that hideous demons, distorted countenances, and waves of flame represent the whole idea. And in that immortal work in which he who sang of hell, purgatory, and heaven, has embodied the belief of his day, still the same fact prevails. You read of the victims of unchaste life hurried on the dark whirlwind for ever; of the heretics in their coffins of intense fire; and of the guilty spirits who are plunged deep down in "thick-ribbed ice." But in those harrowing pictures which his genius has painted with such vividness, there is not one idea of mental suffering embodied. It is all bodily, awful, intolerable torture. Now all this we believe no longer. The circles of hell and the mountain of purgatory are as fabulous to us as the Tartarus of the heathens. Singular, that in an age in which the chief aim of science appears to be to get rid of physical pain and discomfort, as if these were the worst evils conceivable, the idea of a bodily hell should be just the one at which we have learnt to smile. But with the form, we have also dispossessed ourselves of belief in the reality of retribution at all.

Now Scripture language is symbolical. There is no salt, no worm, no fire to torture. I say not that a diseased soul may not form for itself a tenement hereafter, as here, peculiarly fitted to be the avenue of

suffering; but unquestionably we cannot build upon these expressions a material hell.

Hell is the infinite terror of the soul, whatever that may be. To one man it is pain. Rid him of that, he can bear all degradation. To another it is public shame. Save him from that, and he will creep and crawl before you to submit to any reptile meanness. "Honour me now, I pray thee, before the people," till Samuel turns from the abject thing in scorn. To others, the infinite terror is *that*, compared with which, all these would be a bed of roses. It is the hell of having done wrong—the hell of having had a spirit from God, pure, with high aspirations, and to be conscious of having dulled its delicacy, and degraded its desires—the hell of having quenched a light brighter than the sun's—of having done to another an injury that through time and through eternity never can be undone—infinite, maddening remorse—the hell of knowing that every chance of excellence, and every opportunity of good, has been lost for ever. This is the infinite terror:—this is wrath to come.

You doubt that? Have you ever marked that striking fact, the connection of the successive stages of the soul? How sin can change the countenance, undermine the health, produce restlessness? Think you the grave will end all that? That by some magic change, the moral being shall be buried there, and the soul rise again so changed in every feeling that the very identity of being would be lost, and it would amount to the creation of a new soul? Say you that God is love?

Oh! but look round this world. The aspect of things is stern; very stern. If they be ruled by love, it is a love which does not shrink from human agony. There is a law of infinite mercy here, but there is a law of boundless rigour too. Sin, and you will suffer—that law is not reversed. The young, and the gentle, and the tender, are inexorably subjected to it. We would shield them if we could: but there is that which says they shall not be shielded. They shall weep, and fade, and taste of mortal anguish, even as others. Carry that out into the next world, and you have "wrath to come."

John's baptism, besides, implied the importance of confession. "They were baptized .... confessing their sins." On the eve of a promised new life, they were required to acknowledge the iniquity of past life. In the cure of our spiritual maladies there is a wondrous efficacy, to use a homely phrase, in making a "clean breast." There is something strengthening, something soothing, and at the same time something humbling, in acknowledging that we have done wrong. There is a pride in us which cannot bear pity. There is a diseased sensitiveness which shrinks from the smart of acknowledgment; and yet that smart must be borne before we can be truly soothed. When was it that the younger son in the parable received the ring, and the robe, and the banquet, which represent the rapture of the sense of being forgiven? When he had fortitude enough to go back, mile by mile, step by step, every inch of the way he had gone wrong, borne unflinchingly the sneer of his father's domestics, and, worse than all, the sarcasms of

his immaculate brother, and manfully said out, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." When was it that the publican went down *justified* to his house? When he said, even before a supercilious Pharisee, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" When did the royal delinquent hear the words, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin?" When he gave the sacrifice of his lips —"I have sinned before the Lord." And when did the church of Ephesus rise into the brightest model of a perfect church that has yet been exhibited on earth? After her converts had publicly come forward, burnt those manuscripts which were called "Ephesian letters" to the value of 50,000 pieces of silver, "confessed and showed their deeds." There is a profound truth in the popular anxiety, that a murderer should confess before he dies. It is an instinctive feeling that a true death is better than a false life—that to die with unacknowledged guilt is a kind of lie. To acknowledge his sin is to put it from him, to abjure it—to refuse to acknowledge it as part of himself—to separate it from him—to say, I will keep it as mine no more: then it is gone. Who has a secret of guilt lying like lead upon his heart? As he values serenity of soul, let that secret be made known. And if there be one to-day who is impressed or touched by all this, let him beware how he procrastinates that which was done when John baptized. The iron that once was cooled may never be warmed again —the heart that once had its flood-gates open, and has delayed to pour out the stagnation of its wretchedness, may be closed for ever.

Once more, John's baptism implied the necessity of a renewal of heart. We lose part of the significance of that ceremony from its transplantation away from a climate in which it was natural and appropriate.

Ablution in the East is almost a religious duty: the dust and heat weigh upon the spirits and heart like a load: the removal is refreshment and happiness. And it was impossible to see that significant act—in which the convert went down into the water, travel-worn and soiled with dust, disappeared for one moment, and then emerged pure and fresh—without feeling that the symbol answered to, and interpreted a strong craving of the human heart. It is the desire to wash away that which is past and evil. We would fain go to another country and begin life afresh. We look upon the grave almost with complacency, from the fancy that there we shall lie down to sleep and wake fresh and new. It was this same longing that expressed itself in heathenism by the fabled river of forgetfulness, of which the dead must drink before they can enter into rest.

Now to that craving John gave reality and meaning when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" For else that craving is but a sick fond wish. Had John merely said, "Flee from the wrath to come!" he would have filled man's life with the terrors of anticipated hell. Had he only said, My baptism implies that ye must be pure, he would have crushed men's hearts with the feeling of impossibility: for excellence without Christ is but a dream. He gave meaning and promise to all when he

said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world."

Sin-laden and guilty men—the end of all the Christian ministry is to say that out with power, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Divine life and death! to have had one glimpse of which, with its ennobling impulses, it were worth while to have endured a life of suffering. When we believe that the sacrifice of that Lamb meant love to us, our hearts are lightened of their load: the past becomes as nothing, and life begins afresh. Christ is the River of Forgetfulness in which bygone guilt is overwhelmed.

II. The Baptist's astonishment at his own success. It was a singular scene which was exhibited in those days on the banks of Jordan. There was a crowd of human beings, each having a history of his own, men who have long mouldered in Earth's dust, but who were living then in fresh and vigorous existence. Think of it. Busy life was moving there, beings who had their hopes and fears about time and eternity: to whom life was dear as it is to us at this day. They had come to be cured of that worst of human maladies, the aching of a hollow heart; and a single mortified man was bending over them, whose countenance bore all that peculiar aspect of saintliness which comes from spare diet and austere habits, and all that unruffled composure which comes from lonely communings with God:—a solitary man, who had led a hermit's life, but was possessed of rare sagacity in worldly matters;—for, hermit as he was, John took no half-views of men and

things: there was nothing morbid in his view of life: there was sound common sense in the advice he gave the different classes which came to him. "Repent" with him, did not mean — Come with me into the wilderness to live away from the world, but it meant this: Go back to the world, and live above it, each doing his work in an unworldly spirit. It was a strange spectacle, men of the world coming with implicit reverence to learn the duties of active life from a man whose world was the desert, and who knew nothing of active life except by hearsay.

Now what was the secret of this power by which he chained the hearts of men as by a spell?

One point in the secret of this success was a thing which we see every day. Men of thought and quiet contemplation exercise a wonderful influence over men of action. We admire that which we are not ourselves. The man of business owns the control of the man of religious thoughtfulness. Like coalesces in this world with unlike. The strong and the weak, the contemplative and the active, bind themselves together. They are necessary for each other. The active soldiers and the scheming publicans came to the lonely ascetic John, to hear something of that still, inner life, of which their own career could tell them nothing.

A second cause of this success appears to have been, that it was a ministry of terror. Fear has a peculiar fascination. As children love the tale of the supernatural which yet makes them shudder, so do men, as it would seem, find a delight in the pictures of eternal

woe which terrify them. Partly from the pleasure which there is in vivid emotions, and partly perhaps from a kind of feeling of expiation in the horror which is experienced. You could not go among the dullest set of rustics and preach graphically and terribly of hell-fire without ensuring a large audience. The preaching of John in this respect differed from the tone of Christ's. Christ taught much that God is Love. He spoke a great deal of the Father which is in Heaven. He instructed in those parables which required thoughtful attention, exercise of mind, and a gently sensitive conscience. He spoke didactic, calm discourses, very engaging, but with little excitement in them: such discourses as the Sermon on the Mount, respecting goodness, purity, duties; which assuredly, if any one were to venture so to speak before a modern congregation, would be stigmatized as a moral essay. Accordingly, His success was much less marked than that of John's. No crowds were baptized as His followers: one hundred and twenty, in an upper chamber, appear to have been the fruits of His life-work. To teach so, is assuredly not the way to make strong impressions; but it is the way to work deeply, gloriously—for eternity. How many of John's terrified Pharisees and Sadducees, suppose we, retained the impression six months?

What is your religion? Excitability, romance, impression, fear? Remember, excitement has its uses; impression has its value. John, in all circumstances of his appearance and style of teaching, impressed by excitement. Excitement, warmed feelings, make the first

actings of religious life and the breaking of inveterate habits easier. But excitement and impression are not religion. Neither can you trust to the alarm produced by the thought of eternal retribution. Ye that have been impressed, beware how you let those impressions die away. Die they will, and must: we cannot live in excitement for ever; but beware of their leaving behind them nothing except a languid, jaded heart. If God ever gave you the excitements of religion, breaking in upon your monotony, as John's teaching broke in upon that of Jerusalem, take care. There is no restoring of elasticity to the spring that has been overbent. Let impression pass on at once to acting.

We have another cause to assign for John's success. Men felt that he was real. Reality is the secret of all success. Religion in Jerusalem had long become a thing of forms. Men had settled into a routine of externals, as if all religion centred in these. Decencies and proprieties formed the substance of human life. And here was a man in God's world once more, who felt that religion is an everlasting reality. Here was a man once more, to tell the world that life is sliding into the abyss; that all we see is but a shadow; that the invisible Life within is the only real life. Here was a man who could feel the splendours of God shining into his soul in the desert without the aid of forms. His locust-food, his hair-garment, his indifference to earthly comforts, spoke out once more that one at least could make it a conviction to live and die upon, that man does not live on bread alone, but on the Living Word which

proceedeth out of the mouth of God. And when that crowd dispersed at sunset, and John was left alone in the twilight, with the infinite of darkness deepening round him, and the roll of Jordan by his side, reflecting the chaste clear stars, there was something there higher than Pharisaic forms to speak to him:—There was heaven and eternity to force him to be real. This life was swiftly passing. What is it to a man living like John, but a show and a dream? He was homeless upon earth. Well—but beyond—beyond—in the blue eternities above, there was the prophet's home. He had cut himself off from the solaces of life. He was to make an enemy of the man of honour, Herod. He had made an enemy of the man of religion, the Pharisee. But he was passing into that country, where it matters little whether a man has been clothed in finest linen or in coarsest camel's hair, that still country, where the struggle-storm of life is over, and such as John find their rest at last in the home of God, which is reserved for the True and Brave. If perpetual familiarity with such thoughts as these cannot make a man real, there is nothing in this world that can.

And now, look at this man, so disciplined. Life to John was a reality. The citizens of Jerusalem could not go to him, as they might have gone to the schools of their rabbis, for learned subtleties, or to the groves of Athenian literature for melting imagery. Speech falls from him, sharp—rugged—cutting:—a word and no more. "Repent!"—"wrath to come." "The axe is laid at the root of the trees." "Fruitless trees will

be cast into the fire." He spoke as men speak when they are in earnest, simply and abruptly, as if the graces of oratory were out of place. And then, that life of his! The world could understand it. There was written on it, in letters that needed no magnifying glass to read, "Not of this world."

It is, after all, this which tells—the reality of unworldliness. The world is looking on to see what religious people mean. It has a most profound contempt for unreality. Such a man as John comes before them. Well, we understand that:—we do not like him: get him out of the way, and kill him if he interferes with us—but it is genuine. They then turn and see other men drawing ingenious distinctions between one kind of amusement and another—indulging themselves on the sabbath-day and condemning others who do similar things, and calling that unworldliness. They see that a religious man has a shrewd eye to his interests—is quick at making a bargain—captivated by show and ostentation—affects titled society. The world is very keen-sighted: it looks through the excitement of your religious meetings, quietly watches the zest of your scandal, scans your consciousness, and the question which the world keeps putting pertinaciously is, Are these men in earnest? Is it any marvel if Christian unreality is the subject of scoffs and bitter irony?

Let men see that you are real—inconsistent, it may be, sinful: oh! full of sin—impetuous—hasty—perhaps stern—John was. But compel them to feel that you are in earnest. This is the secret of influence.

So much, then, for the causes of success. Now let us analyse that success a little more closely, by considering the classes of men on whom that influence told.

First of all, we read of soldiers, publicans, and the poor people, coming to John for advice, and with the acknowledgment of guilt; and we do not read that their arrival excited the smallest emotion of astonishment in John's bosom. The wonder was not *there*. No wonder that the poor, whose lot in this world is hard, should look wistfully for another. No wonder that soldiers, with their prompt habits of obedience and their perpetual opportunities of self-devotion, should recognise with reverence the type of heroic life which John presented. No wonder that the guilty publicans should come for purification of heart. For is it not true that the world's outcasts may be led by their very sin to Christ? It is no wonder to see a saddened sinner seeking in the disappointment and weariness of solitary age that which he rejected in the heat of youth. Why, even the world is not astonished when it sees the sinner become the saint. Of course, the world has its own sarcastic account to give. Dissipation leads to weariness, and weariness to satiety, and satiety to devotion, and so your great sinner becomes a great saint, and serves God when all his emotions are exhausted. Be it so. He who knew our nature well, knew that marvellous revolutions go on in the soul of a man whom the world counts lost. In our wildest wanderings there is sometimes a Love, strong as a

father's, tender as a mother's, watching over us, and bringing back the erring child again. Know you not the law of nature? Have you never seen how out of chaos and ferment nature brings order again? Life out of death, beauty out of corruption? Such, gainsay it who will, often is the history of the rise of saintliness and purity out of a disappointed, bruised, and penitent spirit. When the life-hopes have become a wreck—when the cravings of the heart for keen excitement have been ministered to so abundantly as to leave nothing but loathing and self-reproach behind—when innocence of heart is gone—yes—even then—scoff who will—the voice of Him is heard, who so dearly purchased the right to say it: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

John was not surprised that such came to him, owning the power of life-giving truth.

But among those who came, there were two classes who did move him to marvel. The first was the moral, self-satisfied formalist. The second was the calm, metaphysical, reasoning infidel. When he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees coming, he said: "Who hath warned *you?*"

Now who were these men?

The Pharisees were men who rested satisfied with the outward. The form of religion, which varies in all ages, *that* they wanted to stereotype. The inner heart of religion—the unchangeable—justice—mercy—truth—that they could not feel. They had got their two schools of orthodoxy—the school of Shammai and the

school of Hillel; and, under the orthodoxy of these popular idols of the day, they were content to lose their own power of independent thought: souls that had shrunk away from all goodness and nobleness, and withered into the mummy of a soul. They could jangle about the breadth of a phylactery. They could discuss, as if it were a matter of life and death, ecclesiastical questions about tithe. They could decide to a furlong the length of journey allowable on the sabbath-day. But they could not look with mercy upon a broken heart pouring itself out to God in His temple—nor suffer a hungry man to rub an ear of corn on the Sabbath—nor cover the shame of a tempted sister or an erring brother. Men without souls, from whose narrow hearts the grandeur of everlasting truth was shut out.

There was another class in Israel as different from the Pharisees as man can be from man. The Sadducees could not be satisfied with the creed of Pharisaism, and had begun to cross-examine its pretensions. They felt that the thing which stood before them there, challenging the exclusive name of religion, with its washing of cups, its fastings, its parchment texts, this had nothing in it of the Eternal and the Infinite. This comes not from the Almighty God, and so from doubt they passed on to denial. The usual order had taken place. The reaction from superstition is infidelity. The reaction from ultra-strictness is laxity. The reaction from Pharisaism was the Sadducee. And the Sadducee, with a dreadful daring, had had the firmness to say: "Well, then, there is no life to come. That is settled.

I have looked into the abyss without trembling. There is no phantom there. There is neither angel, spirit, nor life to come. And this glorious thing, man, with his deep thoughts, and his great, unsatisfied heart, his sorrows and his loves, godlike and immortal as he seems, is but dust animated for a time; passing into the nothingness out of which he came." That cold and hopeless creed was the creed of Sadduceeism. Human soul were trying to live on that, and find it enough.

And the strange thing was, that these men, so positive in their creed, so distinct in their denial, so intolerant of the very name of future existence, crowded to John to make those confessions, and promise that new life, which were meet for men who desired to flee from the wrath to come. Wrath to come! What had the infidel to do with that? Repentance unto life! Why should the denier of life listen to that? Fruits meet for repentance! What had the formalist to do with that rebuke, whose life was already all that could be needed? "O generation of vipers," said the prophet, in astonishment, "who hath warned *you* to flee from the wrath to come?"

I deduce, from those facts which astonished John, two truths. Formalism, even morality, will not satisfy the conscience of man. Infidelity will not give rest to his troubled spirit. It is a pregnant lesson, if we will only read it thoughtfully, to consider those two classes going up for baptism. That heart of man which the moralist tells us is so pure and excellent, the light of day has shone into it, and behold, in the moralist's self,

it is not pure, but polluted and miserable: else, what has that Pharisee to do with the symbol of new life which he is gone to John to use? That clear, unbiassed intellect with which the sceptic reached his conclusions, behold it is not clear nor unbiassed! It has been warped by an evil life. His heart is restless, and dark, and desolate: else, why is that Sadducee trembling on Jordan's brink? There is a something which they want, both Pharisee and Sadducee, and they come to see if baptism will give it them. Strangely moved indeed must those men have been—ay, shaken to the inmost soul—before they could so contradict their own profession as to acknowledge that there was a hollowness in their hearts. We almost fancy we can stand at the water's edge and hear the confession which was wrung from their lips, hot-burning and choked with sobs, during the single hour in which reality had forced itself upon their souls:—"It is a lie!—we are *not* happy—we are miserable—Prophet of the Invisible! what hast thou got to tell us of that awful other world?"

For when man comes to front the everlasting God, and look the splendour of His judgments in the face, personal integrity, the dream of spotlessness and innocence, vanish into thin air: your decencies, and your church-goings, and your regularities, and your attachment to a correct school and party, your gospel formulas of sound doctrine—what is all that in front of the blaze of the wrath to come?

And scepticism, too, how philosophical soever, and how manly it may appear, will it rock the conscience

with an everlasting lullaby? Will it make, with all its reasonings, the tooth of the worm less sharp, and the fire less fierce that smoulders inwardly? Let but the plain, true man speak. We ask from him no rhetoric. We require no eloquence. Let him but say, in his earnestness, Repent—or—Wrath to come—and then what has infidelity to fall back upon?

There is rest in this world nowhere except in Christ the Manifested Love of God. Trust in excellence, and the better you become, the keener is the feeling of deficiency. Wrap up all in doubt, and there is a stern voice that will thunder at last out of the wilderness upon your dream.

A heart renewed—a loving heart—a penitent and humble heart—a heart broken and contrite, purified by love—that and only that is the rest of man. Spotlessness may do for angels—Repentance unto Life is the highest that belongs to man.

IX.

Preached November 25, 1849.

CAIAPHAS' VIEW OF VICARIOUS SACRIFICE.

JOHN xi. 49—53.—"And one of them, named Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself: but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together in one the children of God, that were scattered abroad. Then, from that day forth, they took counsel together for to put him to death."

ON this occasion, the first resolution passed the Jewish Sanhedrim to compass the death of Jesus. The immediate occasion of their meeting was the fame of the resurrection of Lazarus. There were many causes which made the Saviour obnoxious to the Priests and Pharisees. If that teaching were once received, their reign was over: a teaching which abolished the pretensions of a priesthood, by making every man his own priest, to offer spiritual sacrifices to God—which identified Religion with Goodness—making spiritual excellence, not ritual regularity, the righteousness which God accepts

—which brought God within the reach of the sinner and the fallen—which simplified the whole matter by making Religion a thing of the heart, and not of rabbinical learning or theology:—such teaching swept away all the exclusive pretensions of Pharisaism, made the life which they had been building up with so much toil for years, time wasted, and reduced their whole existence to a lie.

This was the ground of their hatred to the Son of Man. But this was not the ground which they put forward. He was tried chiefly on the charge of treason against the Emperor; and the argument by which the mind of the judge was principally swayed, was, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend." The present passage contains the first trace of the adoption of that ground. "If we let him alone, the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation."

Be it observed, then, the real ground of opposition was hatred of the light. The ostensible ground was patriotism, public zeal, loyalty, far-sighted policy: and such is life. The motive on which a deed of sin is done is not the motive which a man allows to others, or whispers to himself. Listen to the criminal receiving sentence, and the cause of condemnation is not the enormity of the crime, but the injustice of the country's law. Hear the man of disorderly life, whom society has expelled from her bosom, and the cause of the expulsion is not his profligacy, but the false slander which has misrepresented him. Take his own account

of the matter, and he is innocent—injured—pure. For there are names so tender, and so full of fond endearment, with which this world sugars over its dark guilt towards God, with a crust of superficial whiteness, that the Sin, on which eighteen centuries have looked back appalled, was, to the doers of that Sin, nothing atrocious, but respectable, defensible, nay, even, under the circumstances, necessary.

The judgment of one of these righteous murderers was given in remarkable terms. Apparently there were some in the council, such men as Nicodemus, who could not acquiesce in the view given of the matter. Doubtless they alleged the unfairness of the proceeding, and the innocence of the Accused; upon which Caiaphas replied, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient that one man die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." The remarkable point in this judgment is, that it contained the very central doctrine of Christianity: unconsciously, Caiaphas had uttered the profoundest of all truths, the necessity of the suffering of the innocent for the guilty. He had stated it in the very words which St. John could have himself adopted. But they meant one thing in the lips of holy Love, and quite another thing in the lips of tyrannical Policy. Yet St. John, contemplating that sentence years after, could not but feel that there was something in those words deeper than met the ear, a truth almost inspired, which he did not hesitate to call prophetic. "Being high priest that year, he *prophesied*."

We must not, therefore, call this merely a singular

coincidence. It was the same truth viewed from different sides: the side of Caiaphas, and the side of John; the side of the world, and the side of God.—That truth was the vicarious Sacrifice of Christ.

And there are two ways in which you may contemplate that Sacrifice. Seen from the world's point of view, it is unjust, gross, cruel. Seen as John saw it, and as God looks at it, it was the sublimest of all truths; one which so entwines itself with our religious consciousness, that you might as soon tear from us our very being, as our convictions of the reality of Christ's Atonement. Our subject, then, is the vicarious sacrifice of Christ. The words of Caiaphas contain a formal falsehood and a material truth: the outward statement, and an inspired or prophetic inward verity—so that the subject branches into two topics:—

I. The human form, in which the words are false.

II. The divine principle or spirit, in which they are true.

I. The human form, in which the words are false.

Vicarious means in the stead of. When the Pope calls himself the vicar of Christ, he means that he is empowered in the stead of Christ to absolve, decree, &c. When we speak of vicarious suffering, we mean that suffering which is endured in another's stead, and not as the sufferer's own desert.

1. The first falsity in the human statement of that truth of vicarious sacrifice is its injustice. Some one said the

Accused is innocent. The reply was—Better that one should die than many. "It is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not." It was simply with Caiaphas a question of numbers: the unjust expediency of wresting the law a little to do much apparent good. The reply to that was plain. Expediency cannot obliterate Right and Wrong. Expediency may choose the best possible when the conceivable best is not attainable; but in right and wrong there is no better and best. Thou *shalt* not do wrong. Thou *must* not: you may not tell a lie to save life. Better that the whole Jewish nation should perish than that a Jewish legislature should steep its hand in the blood of one innocent. It is *not* expedient to do injustice.

There are cases in which it is expedient to choose the sacrifice of one instead of that of many—when a whole army or regiment has mutinied, the commander, instead of general butchery, may select a few to perish as examples to the rest. There is nothing here unjust. The many escape, but the few who die deserved to die. But no principle could justify a commander in selecting an innocent man, condemning him by unjust sentence, and affecting to believe that he was guilty, while the transgressors escaped, and learned the enormity of their transgressions by seeing execution done upon the guiltless. No principle can justify—nothing can do more than palliate the conduct of the ship's crew upon the raft who slay one of their number to support their existence on his flesh. No man would justify the parent,

pursued in his chariot by wolves over Siberian snows, who throws out one of his children to the pack, that the rest may escape while their fangs are buried in their victim. You feel at once, expediency has no place here. Life is a trifle compared with Law. Better that all should perish by a visitation of God than that they should be saved by one murder.

I do not deny that this aspect has been given to the sacrifice of Christ. It has been represented as if the majesty of Law demanded a victim: and so as it glutted its insatiate thirst, one victim would do as well as another—the purer and the more innocent the better. It has been exhibited as if Eternal Love resolved in fury to strike, and so as He had His blow, it mattered not whether it fell on the whole world, or on the precious head of His own chosen Son.

Unitarianism has represented the Scriptural view in this way; or, rather, perhaps, we should say, it has been so represented to Unitarians—and, from a view so horrible, no wonder if Unitarianism has recoiled. But it is not our fault if some blind defenders of the truth have converted the self-devotion of Love into a Brahminical sacrifice. If the work of redemption be defended by parallels drawn from the most atrocious records and principles of Heathenism, let not the fault be laid upon the Bible. We disclaim that as well as they. It makes God a Caiaphas.—It makes Him adopt the words of Caiaphas in the sense of Caiaphas. It represents Him in terms which better describe the ungoverned rage of Saul, missing his stroke at David,

who has offended, and in disappointed fury dashing his javelin as his own son Jonathan.

You must not represent the Atonement as depending on the justice of unrighteous expediency.

2. This side of viewing the truth was the side of selfishness. It was not even the calm resolve of men balancing whether it be better for one to die or many; but whether it is better that He or *we* should perish. It is conceivable in the case supposed above, that a parent in the horrible dilemma should be enough bewildered to resolve to sacrifice one rather than lose all; but it is not conceivable that the doubt in his mind should be this—Shall *I* and the rest perish or this one? —yet this was the spirit in which the party of Caiaphas spoke. The Romans will come and take away *our* place and *our* nation.

And this spirit, too, is in human nature. The records of antiquity are full of it. If a fleet could not sail, it was assumed that the deities were offended. The purest and tenderest maiden of the royal household was selected to bleed upon the altar: and when the sharp knife passed to her innocent heart, this was the feeling in the bosoms of those stern and unrelenting warriors—of the blood and of the stock of Caiaphas—Better she than we.

This *may* be the way in which the sacrifice of Christ is regarded by us. There is a kind of acquiescence in the Atonement which is purely selfish. The more bloody the representation of the character of God, the greater, of course, the satisfaction in feeling sheltered

from it. The more Wrath instead of Love is believed to be the Divine name, the more may a man find joy in believing that he is safe. It is the feeling of the Siberian story: the innocent has glutted the wolves; and we may pursue our journey in safety. Christ has suffered, and I am safe. He bore the agony—I take the reward: I may now live with impunity: and, of course, it is very easy to call acquiescence in that arrangement humility, and to take credit for the abnegation of self-righteousness: but who ever can acquiesce in that thought chiefly in reference to *personal safety*, and, without desiring to share the Redeemer's Cross, aspire to enjoy the comforts and the benefits of the Redeemer's sacrifice, has but something of the spirit of Caiaphas after all, the spirit which contentedly sacrifices Another for self—selfishness assuming the form of wisdom.

II. We pass to the prophetic or hidden spirit in which these words are true.

I observe, first, that vicarious sacrifice is the Law of Being. It is a mysterious and fearful thing to observe how all God's universe is built upon this law, how it penetrates and pervades all Nature, so that if it were to cease, Nature would cease to exist. Hearken to the Saviour himself expounding this principle:—"Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." We are justified, therefore, in assuming the Law of Nature to be the Law of His own Sacrifice, for He himself represents it as the parallel.

Now observe this world of God's. The mountain-rock must have its surface rusted into putrescence and become dead soil, before the herb can grow. The destruction of the mineral is the life of the vegetable. Again the same process begins. The "corn of wheat dies," and out of death more abundant life is born. Out of the soil in which deciduous leaves are buried, the young tree shoots vigorously, and strikes its roots deep down into the realm of decay and death. Upon the life of the vegetable world, the myriad forms of higher life sustain themselves—still the same law: the sacrifice of life to give life. Further still. Have we never pondered over that mystery of nature—the dove struck down by the hawk—the deer trembling beneath the stroke of the lion—the winged fish falling into the jaws of the dolphin? It is the solemn law of vicarious sacrifice again. And as often as man sees his table covered with the flesh of animals slain, does he behold, whether he think of it or not, the deep mystery and law of being. They have surrendered their innocent lives that he may live. Nay, further still—it is as impossible for man to live as it is for man to be redeemed, except through vicarious suffering. The anguish of the mother is the condition of the child's life. His very being has its roots in the law of sacrifice; and from his birth onwards, instinctively this becomes the law which rules his existence. There is no blessing which was ever enjoyed by man which did not come through this. There was never a country cleared for civilization, and purified of its swamps and forests, but the first settlers

paid the penalty of that which their successors enjoy. There never was a victory won, but the conquerors who took possession of the conquest passed over the bodies of the noblest slain, who died that they might win.

Now observe, all this is the Law obeyed, either unconsciously or else instinctively. But in the redemption of our humanity, a moment comes when that law is recognised as the will of God adopted *consciously*, and voluntarily obeyed as the law of man's existence. Then it is that man's true nobleness, his only possible blessedness, and his redemption from blind instincts and mere selfishness, begin. You may evade that law—you may succeed in living as Caiaphas did, sacrificing others, instead of yourself—and men will call you wise, and prudent, and respectable. But you are only a Caiaphas:—Redeemed you are not. Your proper humanity has not begun.

The Highest Man recognised that Law, and joyfully embraced it as the law of His existence. It was the consciousness of His surrender to that as God's will, and the voluntariness of the act, which made it Sacrifice. Hear Him: "No man taketh my life from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." "*This commandment have I received from my Father.*" Had he been by the wiles of Caiaphas simply surprised and dragged struggling and reluctant to doom, He would have been a victim, but not a sacrifice—He would have been an object of our compassion, but by no means of our admiring wonder. It was the foresight of all the result of His opposition to the world's sin, and

His steady uncompromising battle against it, notwithstanding, in every one of its forms, knowing that He must be its victim at the last, which prevented His death from being merely the death of a lamb slain unconsciously on Jewish altars, and elevated it to the dignity of a true and proper Sacrifice.

We go beyond this, however. It was not merely a sacrifice, it was a sacrifice for sin. "His soul was made an offering for sin." Neither was it only a sacrifice for sin—it was a sacrifice for the *world's* sin. In the text, "that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

Two ideas are necessary to be distinctly apprehended by us in order to understand that—the first is the notion of Punishment, the second is the idea of the world's sin.

By punishment is simply meant the penalty annexed to transgression of a law. Punishment is of two kinds: the penalty which follows ignorant transgression, and the chastisement which ensues upon wilful disobedience. The first of these is called imputed guilt, the second is actual guilt. By imputed guilt is meant, in theological language, that a person is treated as if he were guilty: —if, for example, you approach too near the whirling wheel of steam machinery, the mutilation which follows is the punishment of temerity. If the traveller ignorantly lays his hand on the cockatrice's den, the throb of the envenomed fang is the punishment of his ignorance. He has broken a law of nature—and the guilt of the infraction is imputed to him—there is penalty: but there

is none of the chastisement which follows sin. His conscience is not made miserable. He only suffers. Further,—according to the constitution of this world, it is not only our own transgressions of ignorance, but besides, the faults of others, which bring pain and sorrow on us. The man of irritable and miserably nervous temperament owes that often to a father's intemperance. Many a man has to struggle all his life with the penury which he reaps as the harvest of a distant ancestor's extravagance. In the strictest sense of the word, these are punishments; the consequences annexed to transgression: and, in the language of theology, they are called imputed guilt. But there is an all-important distinction between them and the chastisements of personal iniquity. If a man suffer ill health or poverty as the results of his own misconduct, his conscience forces him to refer this to the wrath of God. He is reaping as he had sown, and the miseries of conscious fault are added to his penalty. But if such things come as the penalty of the wrong of others, then, philosophically though you may call them punishment, in the popular sense of the word they are no punishments at all, but rather corrective discipline, nay, even richest blessings, if they are received from a Father's hand, and transmuted by humbleness into the means of spiritual growth.

Apply all this to the sacrifice of Christ. Let no man say that Christ bore the wrath of God. Let no man say that God was angry with His Son. We are sometimes told of a mysterious anguish which Christ endured, the consequence of Divine wrath, the sufferings of a

heart laden with the conscience of the world's transgressions, which He was bearing as if they were His own sins. Do not add to the Bible what is not in the Bible. The Redeemer's conscience was not bewildered to feel *that* His own, which was *not* his own. He suffered no wrath of God. Twice came the voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am *well pleased.*" There was seen an angel strengthening Him. Nay, even to the last, never did the consciousness of purity and the Father's Love forsake Him. "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Christ came into collision with the world's evil, and He bore the penalty of that daring. He approached the whirling wheel, and was torn in pieces. He laid His hand upon the cockatrice's den, and its fangs pierced Him. It is the law which governs the conflict with evil. It can be only crushed by suffering from it. . . . . The Son of man who puts His naked foot on the serpent's head, crushes it: but the fang goes into His heel.

The Redeemer bore imputed sin. He bore the penalty of others' sin. He was punished. Did He bear the anger of the Most High? Was His the hell of an accusing conscience? In the Name of Him who is God, not Caiaphas, *never.* Something more, however, is necessary to complete our notion of Punishment. It is a right estimate of Law. We are apt to think of Punishment as something quite arbitrary, which can be remitted or changed at will. Hence, we almost always connect it with the idea of wrath. Hence, the heathen tried to bribe and coax their deities to spare. And hence the sacrifice of

Christ comes to be looked upon in the light of a sagacious or ingenious contrivance, a mere "scheme." Now remember what Law is. The moral Laws of this universe are as immutable as God Himself. Law is the Being of God. God cannot alter those laws: He cannot make wrong right. He cannot make Truth falsehood, nor falsehood truth. He cannot make sin blessed, nor annex hell to innocence. Law moves on its majestic course irresistible. If His chosen Son violates Law, and throws himself from the pinnacle, He dies. If you resist a law in its eternal march, the universe crushes you, that is all. Consider what Law is, and then the idea of bloody vengeance passes away altogether from the Sacrifice. It is not "an eye for an eye," and "a tooth for a tooth," in the sanguinary spirit of the old retaliatory legislation. It is the eternal impossibility of violating that law of the universe whereby penalty is annexed to transgression, and must fall, either laden with curse, or rich in blessing.

The second idea which it behoves us to master is that of the world's sin. The apostle John always viewed sin as a great connected principle; *One;* a single world-spirit—exactly as the electricity with which the universe is charged, is indivisible, imponderable, one, so that you cannot separate it from the great ocean of fluid. The electric spark that slumbers in the dew-drop is part of the flood which struck the oak. Had that spark not been there, it could be demonstrated that the whole previous constitution of the universe might have been different, and the oak not struck.

Let us possess ourselves of this view of sin, for it is the true one. Separate acts of sin are but manifestations of one great principle. It was thus that the Saviour looked on the sins of His day. The Jews of that age had had no hand in the murder of Abel or Zacharias; but they were of kindred spirit with the men who slew them. Condemning their murderers, they imitated their act. In that imitation they "allowed the deeds of their fathers;" they shared in the guilt of the act which had been consummated, because they had the spirit which led to it. "The blood of them all shall come on this generation." It was so, too, that Stephen looked on the act of his assassins. When God's glory streamed upon his face, he felt that the transaction going on then was not simply the violence of a mob in an obscure corner of the world: it was an outbreak of the Great Principle of evil—He saw in their act the resurrection of the spirit of those who had "resisted the Holy Ghost," in their day, slain the prophets, opposed Moses, crucified "the just one," and felt that their genuine descendants were now opposing themselves to the form in which Truth and Goodness were appearing in his day.

It is in this way only that you will be able with any reality of feeling to enter into the truth that your sins nailed Him to the cross: that the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all: that He died "not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." If, for instance, indisputable evidence be given of the saintliness of a man whose creed and views are not

yours, and rather than admit that Good in him *is* Good, you invent all manner of possible motives to discredit his excellence, then let the thought arise—This is the resurrection of the spirit which was rampant in the days of Jesus; the spirit of those who saw the purest Goodness, and rather than acknowledge it to be good, preferred to account for it as a diabolical power. Say to yourself—I am verging on the spirit of the sin that was unpardonable—I am crucifying the Son of God afresh. If in society you hear the homage unrebuked,—Honour to the rich man's splendid offering, instead of glory to the widow's humble mite — if you see the weak and defenceless punished severely for the sins which the great and strong do unblushingly, and even with the connivance and admiration of society—if you find sins of frailty placed on the same level with sins of pride and presumption—or if you find guilt of any kind palliated instead of mourned, then let the dreadful thought arise in the fulness of its meaning—I allow the deeds of those days—His blood shall come upon this generation. My sin and your sin, the sin of all, bears the guilt of the Redeemer's sacrifice. It *was* vicarious—He suffered for what He never did. "Not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

To conclude—Estimate rightly the death of Christ. It was not simply the world's example—it was the world's Sacrifice. He died not merely as a Martyr to the Truth. His death is the world's life. Ask ye what life is? Life is not exemption from penalty. Salvation

is not escape from suffering and punishment. The Redeemer suffered punishment: but the Redeemer's soul had blessedness in the very midst of punishment. Life is elevation of soul—nobleness—Divine character. The spirit of Caiaphas was death: to receive all, and give nothing: to sacrifice others to himself. The spirit of Christ was life: to give and not receive: to be sacrificed, and not to sacrifice. Hear Him again—"He that loseth his life, the same shall find it." That is life: the spirit of losing all for Love's sake. That is the soul's life which alone is blessedness and heaven. By realizing that ideal of humanity, Christ furnished the Life which we appropriate only when we enter into His spirit.

Listen:—Only by renouncing sin is His death to sin yours—only by quitting it are you free from the guilt of His blood, only by voluntary acceptance of the law of the Cross, self-surrender to the will of God, and self-devotion to the good of others as the law of your being, do you enter into that present and future heaven which is the purchase of His vicarious sacrifice.

X.

Preached December 2, 1849.

REALIZING THE SECOND ADVENT.

Job xix. 25—27.—"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me."

The hardest, the severest, the last lesson which man has to learn upon this earth, is submission to the will of God. It is the hardest lesson, because to our blinded eyesight it often seems a cruel will. It is a severe lesson, because it can be only taught by the blighting of much that has been most dear. It is the last lesson, because when a man has learned that, he is fit to be transplanted from a world of wilfulness, to a world in which one Will alone is loved, and only one is done. All that saintly experience ever had to teach, resolves itself into this, the lesson how to say affectionately, "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." Slowly and stubbornly our hearts acquiesce in that. The holiest in this congregation, so far as he has mastered the lesson, will

acknowledge that many a sore and angry feeling against his God had to be subdued, many a dream of earthly brightness broken, and many a burning throb stilled in a proud resentful heart, before he was willing to suffer God to be sovereign in His own world, and do with him and his as seemed to Him best. The earliest record that we have of this struggle in the human bosom is found in this book of Job. It is the most ancient statement we have of the perplexities and miseries of life, so graphic, so true to nature, that it proclaims at once that what we are reading is drawn not from romance but life. It has been said, that religious experience is but the fictitious creation of a polished age, when fanciful feelings are called into existence by hearts bent back, in reflex action and morbid, on themselves. We have an answer to that in this book. Religion is no morbid fancy. In the rough rude ages when Job lived, when men did not dwell on their feelings as in later centuries, the heart-work of religion was, manifestly, the same earnest, passionate thing that it is now. The heart's misgivings were the same beneath the tent of an Arabian Emir which they are beneath the roof of a modern Christian. Blow after blow fell on the Oriental Chieftain:—one day he was a father—a prince—the lord of many vassals and many flocks, and buoyant in one of the best of blessings, health; the next, he was a childless, blighted, ruined man. And then it was that there came from Job's lips those yearnings for the quiet of the grave, which are so touching, so real; and, considering that some of the strongest of the Elect of God have

yielded to them for a moment, we might almost say so pardonable: "I should have been at rest—where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. There the prisoners rest together: they hear not the voice of the oppressor. Wherefore is light given unto him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter of soul—which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures—which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave?" What is the book of Job but the record of an earnest soul's perplexities? The double difficulty of life solved there, the existence of moral evil—the question whether suffering is a mark of wrath or not. What falls from Job's lips is the musing of a man half-stunned, half-surprised, looking out upon the darkness of life, and asking sorrowfully—why are these things so? And all that falls from his friends' lips is the commonplace remarks of men upon what is inscrutable, maxims learned second-hand by rote and not by heart, fragments of deep truths, but truths misapplied, distorted, torn out of all connection of time and place, so as to become actual falsehoods, only blistering a raw wound. It was from these awkward admonitions that Job appealed in the text. He appealed from the tribunal of man's opinion to a tribunal where sincerity shall be cleared and vindicated. He appealed from a world of confusion, where all the foundations of the earth are out of course, to a world where all shall be set right. He appealed from the dark dealings of a God whose way it is to hide Himself, to a God who shall stand upon this earth in the

clear radiance of a love on which suspicion's self cannot rest a doubt. It was faith straining through the mist, and discerning the firm land that is beyond. "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth."

We take two points:—

I. The certainty of God's interference in the affairs of this world.

II. The means of realizing that interference.

God's interference, again, is contemplated in this passage in a twofold aspect: A present superintendence —"I know that my Redeemer liveth." A future, personal, visible interference—"He shall stand at the latter-day upon the earth."

I. His present superintendence.

1. The first truth contained in that is God's personal existence. It is not chance, nor fate, which sits at the wheel of this world's revolutions. It was no fortuitous concourse of atoms which massed themselves into a world of beauty. It was no accidental train of circumstances which has brought the human race to their present state. It was a living God. And it is just so far as *this* is the conviction of every day, and every hour, and every minute—"My Redeemer *liveth*"—that one man deserves to be called more religious than another. To be religious is to feel that God is the Ever Near. It is to go through life with this thought coming instinctively and unbidden, "Thou, God, seest

me." A life of religion is a life of faith: and faith is that strange faculty by which man feels the presence of the invisible; exactly as some animals have the power of seeing in the dark. That is the difference between the Christian and the world. Most men know nothing beyond what they see. Their lovely world is all in all to them: its outer beauty: not its hidden Loveliness.—Prosperity—struggle—sadness—it is all the same:—They struggle through it all alone, and when old age comes, and the companions of early days are gone, they feel that they are solitary. In all this strange deep world, they never meet, or but for a moment, the Spirit of it all, who stands at their very side. And it is exactly the opposite of this that makes a Christian. Move where he will, there is a Thought and a Presence which he cannot put aside. He is haunted for ever by the Eternal Mind. God looks out upon him from the clear sky, and through the thick darkness—is present in the rain-drop that trickles down the branches, and in the tempest that crashes down the forest. A Living Redeemer stands beside him—goes with him—talks with him, as a man with his friend. The emphatic description of a life of spirituality is: "Enoch walked with God:" and it seems to be one reason why a manifestation of God was given us in the flesh, that this Livingness of God might be more distinctly felt by us. We must not throw into these words of Job a meaning which Job had not. Reading these verses, some have discovered in them all the Christian doctrine of the Second Advent—of a resurrection—of the humanity of

Christ. This is simply an anachronism. Job was an Arabian Emir, not a Christian. All that Job meant by these words was, that he knew he had a vindicator in God above: that though his friends had the best of it then, and though worms were preying on his flesh, yet at last God Himself would interfere to prove his innocence. But God has given to us, for our faith to rest on, something more distinct and tangible than He gave to Job. There has been one on earth through whose lips God's voice spoke; and from whose character was reflected the character of God. A living Person manifesting Deity. It is all this added meaning gained from Christ with which we use these words: "I know that my Redeemer liveth." But we must remember that all that was not revealed to Job.

2. The second truth implied in the personal existence of a Redeemer is sympathy. It was the keenest part of Job's trial that no heart beat pulse to pulse with his. His friends misunderstood him; and his wife, in a moment of atheistic bitterness, in the spirit of our own infidel poet, "Let no man say that God in mercy gave that stroke,"— addressed him thus: "Curse God and die." In the midst of this, it seems to have risen upon his heart with a strange power to soothe, that he was not alone: gall and bitterness were distilling from the lips of man; and molten lead was dropping from the hand of God. But there was a great difference between the two inflictions. Men were doing their work, unknowing of the pain they gave: God was meting out His in the scales of a most exquisite compassion, not one drop

too much, and every drop that fell had a meaning of love in it. "Affliction," said the tried man, "cometh not out of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground"—superintending all this, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

And here there is one word full of meaning, from which we collect the truth of sympathy. It is that little word of appropriation, "My" Redeemer. Power is shown by God's attention to the vast: Sympathy by His condescension to the small. It is not the thought of heaven's sympathy by which we are impressed, when we gaze through the telescope on the mighty world of space, and gain an idea of what is meant by infinite. Majesty and power are there—but the very vastness excludes the thought of sympathy. It is when we look into the world of insignificance, which the microscope reveals, and find that God has gorgeously painted the atoms of creation, and exquisitely furnished forth all that belongs to minutest life, that we feel that God sympathises and individualizes. When we are told that God is the Redeemer of the *world*, we know that love dwells in the bosom of the Most High; but if we want to know that God feels for us individually and separately, we must learn by heart this syllable of endearment, "*My* Redeemer." Child of God! if you would have your thought of God something beyond a cold feeling of His presence, let faith *appropriate* Christ. You are as much the object of God's solicitude as if none lived but yourself. He has counted the hairs of your head. In Old Testament language, "He has put

your tears into His bottle." He has numbered your sighs and your smiles. He has interpreted the desires for which you have not found a name nor an utterance yourself. If you have not learned to say *My* Redeemer, then just so far as there is anything tender or affectionate in your disposition, you will tread the path of your pilgrimage with a darkened and a lonely heart; and when the day of trouble comes, there will be none of that triumphant elasticity which enabled Job to look down, as from a rock, upon the surges which were curling their crests of fury at his feet, but could only reach his bosom with their spent spray.

3. The third thing implied in the present superintendence is God's vindication of wrongs. The word translated here Redeemer, is one of quite peculiar signification. In all the early stages of society, the redress of wrongs is not a public, but a private act. It was then as now—blood for blood. But the executioner of the law was invested with something of a sacred character. Now he is the mere creature of a country's law: then he was the delegated Hand of God; for the next of kin to the murdered man stood forward solemnly in God's name as the champion of the defenceless, the *goel* or Avenger of Blood. Goel is the word here: so that, translated into the language of those far-back days, Job was professing his conviction that there was a champion or an Avenger, who would one day do battle for his wrongs.

It is a fearful amount of this kind of work which is in arrear for the Avenger to execute, accumulating

century by century and year by year. From the days of Cain and Abel there have been ever two classes, the oppressor and the oppressed, the gentle humble ones who refuse to right themselves, and the unscrupulous who force them aside. The Church has ever had the world against it. The world struck its first deadly blow by the hand of Cain, and it has been striking ever since: from the battlefield—and the martyr's stake—and the dungeons of the inquisition—and the prisons of the lordly tyrant—the blood of the innocent has cried for vengeance. By taunt and sneer, the world has had her triumph. And the servants of the Meekest have only had *this* to cheer them, "I know that my Redeemer liveth."

There is a persecution sharper than that of the axe. There is an iron that goes into the heart deeper than the knife. Cruel sneers, and sarcasms, and pitiless judgments, and cold-hearted calumnies—these are persecution. There is the tyrant of the nursery, and the playground, and the domestic circle, as well as of the judgment-hall. "Better were it," said the Redeemer, "for that man if a millstone had been hanged about his neck." Did you ever do that?—Did you ever pour bitterness into a heart that God was bruising, by a cold laugh, or a sneer, or a galling suspicion?—Into a sister's heart, or a friend's, or even a stranger's?—Remember—when you sent them, as Job's friends sent him, to pour out their griefs alone before their Father, your name went up to the Avenger's ears, mingled with the cries of His own elect.

There is a second mode in which God interferes in this world's affairs. There is a present superintendence perceived by faith. But there is a future redress which will be made manifest to sight. "He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." I shall see Him.

First of all, there will be a visible, personal interference. All that Job meant was in the case of his own wrongs. But if *we* use those words, we must apply them in a higher sense. The Second Advent of Christ is supposed by some to mean an appearance of Jesus in the flesh to reign and triumph visibly. Others who feel that the visual perception of His Form would be a small blessing, and that the highest and truest Presence is always spiritual and realized by the spirit, believe that His advent will be a coming in Power. We will not dispute:—controversy whets the intellect, and only starves, or worse, poisons the heart. We will take what is certain. Every signal manifestation of the right, and vindication of the truth in judgment, is called in Scripture a coming of the Son of Man. A personal Advent of the Redeemer is one which can be perceived by foes as well as recognised by friends. The destruction of Jerusalem, recognised by the heathen themselves as judgment, is called in the Bible a coming of Christ. In the Deluge—in the destruction of the cities of the plain—in the confusion of tongues—God is said to have come down to visit the earth. There are two classes, then, who shall see that sight. Men like Job, who feel that their Redeemer liveth; and men like Balaam, from whose lips words of truth, terrible to him, came:

"I shall see Him, but not now; I shall behold Him, but not nigh."—"Every eye shall see Him."—*You* will see the triumph of the Right—the destruction of the Wrong. The awful question is: As Balaam—or as Job? Besides this, it will be unexpected: every judgment coming of Christ is as the springing of a mine. There is a moment of deep suspense after the match has been applied to the fuse which is to fire the train. Men stand at a distance, and hold their breath. There is nothing seen but a thin, small column of white smoke, rising fainter, and fainter, till it seems to die away. Then men breathe again: and the inexperienced soldier would approach the place thinking that the thing has been a failure. It is only faith in the experience of the commander, or the veterans, which keeps men from hurrying to the spot again—till just when expectation has begun to die away, the low, deep thunder sends up the column of earth majestically to heaven, and all that was on it comes crashing down again in its far circle, shattered and blackened with the blast.

It is so with this world. By God's Word the world is doomed. The moment of suspense is past: the first centuries in which men expected the convulsion to take place at once; and even Apostles were looking for it in their lifetime. We have fallen upon days of scepticism. There are no signs of ruin yet. We tread upon it like a solid thing fortified by its adamantine hills for ever. There is nothing against that, but a few words in a printed book. But the world is mined: and the spark has fallen; and just at the moment when serenity

is at its height, "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat," and the feet of the Avenger shall stand on Earth.

II. The means of realizing this interference.

There is a difference between knowing a thing and realizing it. When a poor man becomes suddenly the possessor of a fortune or of dignity, it is some time before the thing becomes so natural to him that he can act in his new sphere like his proper self—it is all strangeness at first. When the criminal hears the death-sentence in the dock, his cheeks are tearless. He hears the words, but scarcely understands that they have anything to do with him. He has not realized that it is he himself that has to die. When bereavement comes, it is not at the moment when the breath leaves the body that we feel what has been lost:—we know, but we must have it in detail: see the empty chair—and the clothes that will never be worn again—and perceive day after day pass—and he comes not. Then we realize.

Job *knew* that God was the vindicator of wrongs—that he said. But why did he go on repeating in every possible form the same thing:—"I shall see God—see Him for myself—mine eyes shall behold Him—yes, mine and not another's?" It would seem as if he were doing what a man does when he repeats over and over to himself a thing which he cannot picture out in its reality. It was true: but it was strange, and shadowy, and unfamiliar.

It is no matter of uncertainty to any one of us whether he himself shall die. He knows it. Every time the funeral bell tolls, the thought in some shape suggests itself—I am a mortal, dying man. That is knowing it. Which of us has realized it? Who can shut his eyes, and bring it before him as a reality, that the day will come when the hearse will stand at the door for him, and that all this bright world will be going on without him; and that the very flesh which now walks about so complacently, will have the coffin-lid shut down upon it, and be left to darkness, and loneliness, and silence, and the worm? Or take a case still more closely suggested by the text—out of the grave we must rise again—long after all that is young, and strong, and beautiful before me, shall have mouldered into forgetfulness. Earth shall hear her Master's voice breaking the long silence of the centuries, and our dust shall hear it, and stand up among the myriads that are moving on to judgment. Each man in his own proper identity, his very self, must see God, and be seen by Him—looking out on the strange new scene, and doomed to be an actor in it for all eternity. We all *know* that —on which of our hearts is it stamped, not as a doctrine to be proved by texts, but as one of those things which must be hereafter, and in sight of which we are to live now?

There are two ways suggested to us by this passage for realizing these things. The first of these is meditation. No man forgets what the mind has dwelt long on. It is not by a passing glance that things become riveted

in the memory. It is by forcing the memory to call them up again and again in leisure hours. It is in the power of meditation to bring danger in its reality so vividly before the imagination, that the whole frame can start instinctively as if the blow were falling, or as if the precipice were near. It is in the power of meditation so to engrave scenes of loveliness on a painter's eye, that he transfers to the canvas a vivid picture that was real to him before it was real to others. It is in the power of meditation so to abstract the soul from all that is passing before the bodily eye, that the tongue shall absently speak out the words with which the heart was full, not knowing that others are standing by. It seems to have been this that Job was doing—he was realizing by meditation. You can scarcely read over these words without fancying them the syllables of a man who was thinking aloud.

It is like a soliloquy rather than a conversation. "I shall see him." Myself. Not another. My own eyes.

This is what we want. It is good for a man to get alone, and then in silence think upon his own death, and feel how time is hurrying him along: that a little while ago and he was not—a little while still and he will be no more. It is good to take the Bible in his hands, and read those passages at this season of the year which speak of the Coming and the end of all, till from the printed syllables there seems to come out something that has life, and form, and substance in it, and all things that are passing in the world group themselves in preparation for that, and melt into its outline. Let

us try to live with these things in view. God our Friend—Christ our living Redeemer; our sympathising Brother; our conquering Champion:—The Triumph of Truth: the End of Wrong. We shall live upon realities then: and this world will fade away into that which we know it is, but cannot realize—an Appearance, and a Shadow.

Lastly, God ensures that His children shall realize all this by affliction. Job had admitted these things before, but this time he spoke from the ashes on which he was writhing. And if ever a man is sincere, it is when he is in pain. If ever that superficial covering of conventionalities falls from the soul, which gathers round it as the cuticle does upon the body, and the rust upon the metal, it is when men are suffering. There are many things which nothing but sorrow can teach us. Sorrow is the great Teacher. Sorrow is the Realizer. It is a strange and touching thing to hear the young speak truths which are not yet within the limits of their experience: to listen while they say that life is sorrowful, that friends are treacherous, that there is quiet in the grave. When we are boys we adopt the phrases that we hear. In a kind of prodigal excess of happiness, we say that the world is a dream, and life a nothing—that eternity lasts for ever, and that all here is disappointment. But there comes a day of sharpness, when we find to our surprise that what we said had a meaning in it; and we are startled. That is the sentimentalism of youth passing into reality. In the lips of the young such phrases are only sentimentalities.

What we mean by sentimentalism is that state in which a man speaks things deep and true, not because he feels them strongly, but because he perceives that they are beautiful, and that it is touching and fine to say them—things which he fain *would* feel, and fancies that he *does* feel. Therefore, when all is well, when friends abound, and health is strong, and the comforts of life are around us, religion becomes faint, and shadowy. Religious phraseology passes into cant—the gay, and light, and trifling, use the same words as the holiest; till the earnest man, who *feels* what the world is sentimentalising about, shuts up his heart, and either coins other phrases or else keeps silence. And then it is that if God would rescue a man from that unreal world of names and mere knowledge, He does what he did with Job—He strips him of his flocks, and his herds, and his wealth; or else, what is the equivalent, of the power of enjoying them—the desire of his eyes falls from him at a stroke. Things become real then. Trial brings man face to face with God—God and he touch; and the flimsy veil of bright cloud that hung between him and the sky is blown away: he feels that he is standing outside the earth with nothing between him and the Eternal Infinite. Oh! there is something in the sick-bed, and the aching heart, and the restlessness and the languor of shattered health, and the sorrow of affections withered, and the stream of life poisoned at its fountain, and the cold, lonely feeling of utter rawness of heart which is felt when God strikes home in earnest, that forces a man to feel what is real and what is not.

This is the blessing of affliction to those who will lie still, and not struggle in a cowardly or a resentful way. It is God speaking to Job out of the whirlwind, and saying—In the sunshine and the warmth you cannot meet Me: but in the hurricane and the darkness, when wave after wave has swept down and across the soul, you shall see My Form, and hear My Voice, and know that your Redeemer liveth.

XI.

Preached December 6, 1849.

NOTES OF ADVENT LECTURES, No. 1.

THE GRECIAN.

ROM. i. 14-17.—"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."

THE season of Advent commemorates three facts. 1. That the Lord has come. 2. That He is perpetually coming. 3. That He will yet come in greater glory than has yet appeared. And these are the three Advents—The first in the flesh, which is past: the second in the spirit: the third, His judgment Advent.

The first occupies our attention in these lectures.

We live surrounded by Christian institutions; breathe an atmosphere saturated by Christianity. It is exceedingly difficult even to imagine another state of things.

In the enjoyment of domestic purity, it is difficult to conceive the debasing effects of polygamy: in the midst of political liberty to conceive of the blighting power of slavery: in scientific progress to imagine mental stagnation: in religious liberty and free goodness to fancy the reign of superstition.

Yet to realize the blessings of health, we must sit by the sick-bed: to feel what light is, we must descend into the mine and see the emaciated forms which dwindle away in darkness: to know what the blessing of sunshine is, go down into the valleys where stunted vegetation and dim vapours tell of a scene on which the sun scarcely shines two hours in the day. And to know what we have from Christianity, it is well to cast the eyes sometimes over the darkness from which the Advent of Christ redeemed us.

There are four departments of human nature spoken of in these verses, on which the Light shined. The apostle felt that the Gospel was the power of God unto salvation to the Greeks, the Romans, the Barbarians, and the Jews. In the present lecture we consider Christianity presented to the Grecian character, and superseding the Grecian religion.

Four characteristics marked Grecian life and Grecian religion. Restlessness—Worldliness—The worship of the Beautiful—The worship of the Human.

1. Restlessness.

Polytheism divided the contemplation over many objects: and as the outward objects were manifold,

so was there a want of unity in the inward life. The Grecian mind was distracted by variety. He was to obtain wisdom from one Deity: eloquence from that Mercurius for whom Paul was taken: purity from Diana for whom Ephesus was zealous: protection for his family or country from the respective tutelary deities: success by a prayer to Fortune.

Hence dissipation of mind: that fickleness for which the Greeks were famous: and the restless love of novelty which made Athens a place of literary and social gossip—"some new thing."

All stability of character rests on the contemplation of changeless unity.

So, in modern science, which is eminently Christian, having exchanged the bold theorizing of ancient times for the patient humble willingness to be taught by the facts of nature, and performing its wonders by exact imitation of them—on the Christian principle—the Son of man can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do.

And all the results of science have been to simplify and trace back the manifold to unity. Ancient science was only a number of insulated facts and discordant laws; modern science has gradually ranged these under fewer and ever fewer laws. It is ever tending towards unity of law.

For example—Gravitation. The planet's motion, and the motion of the atom of water that dashes tumultuously, and as it seems lawlessly, down the foam of the cataract: the floating of the cork, the sinking of the

stone, the rise of the balloon, and the curved flight of the arrow, are all brought under one single law—diverse and opposite as they seem.

Hence science is calm and dignified, reposing upon uniform fact. The philosopher's very look tells of repose, resting, as he does, on a few changeless principles.

So also in religion. Christianity proclaimed "One God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Observe the effect in the case of two apostles. St. Paul's view of the Gospel contemplated it as an eternal divine purpose. *His* Gospel, the salvation of the Gentiles, was the eternal purpose which had been hidden from ages and generations. His own personal election was part of an eternal counsel. All the children of God had been predestinated before the creation "unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself." Now see the effect on character. First, on veracity—2 Cor. i. 18, &c. He contemplated the changeless "yea" of God—His own yea became fixed as God's—changeless, and calmly unalterable.

Again, in orthodoxy—"Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Be not carried about by divers and strange doctrines. Truth is one—Error manifold—many opinions, yet there can be but one faith. See how calm and full of rest all this spirit is.

Now consider St. John. His view of the Gospel recognised it rather as the manifestation of love than the carrying out of unity of an everlasting purpose. If you view the world as the Greek did, all is so various that you must either refer it to various deities, or to

different modes of the same Deity. To-day you are happy—God is pleased: to-morrow miserable—God is angry. But St. John referred these all to unity of character—"God is Love." Pain and pleasure, the sigh and smile, the sunshine and the storm, nay hell itself, to him were but the results of Eternal love.

Hence came deep calm—the repose which we are toiling all our lives to find, and which the Greek never found.

II. Worldliness.

There are men and nations to whom this world seems given as their province, as if they had no aspiration above it. If ever there was a nation who understood the science of living, it was the Grecian. They had organized social and domestic life—filled existence with comforts: knew how to extract from everything its greatest measure of enjoyment. This world was their home—this visible world was the object of their worship. Not like the Orientals, who called all materialism bad, and whose highest object was to escape from it, "to be unclothed, not clothed upon," as St. Paul phrases it. The Greek looked upon this world in its fallen state, and pronounced it all "very good."

The results were threefold.

1. Disappointment. Lying on the infinite bosom of Nature, the Greek was yet unsatisfied. And there is an insatiable desire above all external forms and objects in man—all men—which they can never satisfy. Hence his cravings too, like others, was from time to time,

"Who will show us any good?" This dissatisfaction is exhibited in the parable of the prodigal, who is but the symbol of erring humanity. Away from his father's home, the famine came, and he fed on husks. Famine and husks are the world's unsatisfactoriness. A husk is a thing that seems full: is hollow: which stays the appetite for a time, but will not support the life. And such is this world: leaving a hollowness at heart, staying our craving but for a time. "He that drinketh of this water shall thirst again." And the worldly man is trying to satiate his immortal hunger upon husks.

Second result—Degradation. Religion aims at an ideal life above this actual one—to found a divine polity —a kingdom of God—a church of the best. And the life of worldliness pronounces this world to be all. This is to be adorned and beautified. Life as it is. Had you asked the Greek his highest wish, he would have replied, "This world, if it could only last—I ask no more." Immortal youth—and this bright existence. This is to feed on husks: but husks which the swine did eat. No degradation to the swine, for it is their nature; but degradation to man to rest in the outward, visible, and present, for the bosom of God is his home. The Greek, therefore, might be, in his own language, "a reasoning animal," but not one of the children of Heaven.

Third result—Disbelief in Immortality. The more the Greek attached himself to this world, the more the world unseen became a dim world of shades. The earlier traditions of the deep-thinking Orientals, which his forefathers brought from Asia, died slowly away;

and any one who reminded him of them, was received as one would now be who were to speak of purgatory. The cultivated Athenians were for the most part sceptics in the time of Christ. Accordingly, when Paul preached at Athens the resurrection of the dead, they "mocked."

This bright world was all. Its revels—its dances—its theatrical exhibitions—its races—its baths—and academic groves, where literary leisure luxuriated,—these were blessedness; and the Greek's hell was death. Their poets speak pathetically of the misery of the wrench from all that is dear and bright. The dreadfulness of death is one of the most remarkable things that meet us in those ancient writings.

And these men were startled by seeing a new sect rise up to whom death was nothing—who almost courted it. They heard an apostle say at Miletus: "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." For the cross of Christ had crucified in their hearts the Grecian's world. To them life was honour, integrity, truth; that is, the soul: to this all other was to be sacrificed. This was the proper self, which could only die by sin, by denying its own existence. The rise of the higher life had made this life nothing, and delivered those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject unto bondage.

Appeal to the worldly-minded. Melancholy spectacle! Men and women shutting out the idea of death,—the courtesies of society concealing from them the mention

of their age, by all false appliances of dress, &c., &c., and staying the appearance of the hand of time. You must die. The day will come, and the coffin. Life in God alone robs that thought of dreadfulness: when the resurrection being begun within, you can look upon the decay of the outward man, and feel *I* am not dying.

III. The worship of the Beautiful.

The Greek saw this world almost only on its side of beauty. His name for it was Kosmos, divine order or regularity. He looked at actions in the same way. One and the same adjective expressed the noble and the beautiful. If he wanted to express a perfect man, he called him a musical or harmonious man.

What was the consequence? Religion degenerated into the arts. All the immortal powers of man were thrown upon the production of a work of the imagination. The artist who had achieved a beautiful statue was almost worshipped. The poet who had produced a noble poem was the prophet of the nation. The man who gave the richest strains of melody was half divine. This was their inspiration. The arts became religion, and religion ended in the arts.

Hence, necessarily, sensuality became religious; because all feelings produced by these arts, chiefly the voluptuous ones, were authorized by religion. There is a peculiar danger in refinement of sensuous enjoyments. Coarse pleasures disgust, and pass for what they are; but who does not know that the real danger and triumph of voluptuousness are when it approaches the soul veiled

under the drapery of elegance?—They fancied themselves above the gross multitude: but their sensuality, disguised even from themselves, was sensuality still—ay, and even at times, in certain festivals, broke out into gross and unmistakeable licentiousness.

And hence, the greatest of the Greeks in his imaginary Republic banished from that perfect state all the strains which were soft and enfeebling—all the poems that represented any deeds of Deities unworthy of the Divine—all the statues which could suggest one single feeling of impurity. Himself a worshipper of the purest beautiful, it was yet given to his all but inspired heart, to detect the lurking danger before which Greece was destined to fall—the approach of sensuality through the worship of the graceful and the refined.

There is this danger now. Men are awakened from coarse rude life to the desire of something deeper. And the God or Spirit of this world can subtly turn that aside into channels which shall effectually enfeeble and ruin the soul. Refinement—melting imagery—dim religious light: all the witchery of form and colour—music—architecture: all these, even coloured with the hues of religion, producing feelings either religious or quasi-religious, may yet do the world's work. For all attempt to impress the heart through the senses, "to make perfect through the flesh," is fraught with that danger beneath which Greece sunk. There is a self-deception in those feelings: the thrill—and the sense of mystery—and the luxury of contemplation—and the impressions on the senses: all these lie very close to

voluptuousness — enfeeblement of heart — yea, even impurity.

This, too, is the ruinous effect of an education of accomplishments. The education of the taste, and the cultivation of the feelings in undue proportion, destroys the masculine tone of mind. An education chiefly romantic or poetical, not balanced by hard practical life, is simply the ruin of the soul.

If any one ever felt the beauty of this world it was He. The beauty of the lily nestling in the grass—He felt it all: but the beauty which he exhibited in life was the stern loveliness of moral action. The King in His Beauty "had no form or comeliness:" it was the beauty of obedience—of noble deeds—of unconquerable fidelity—of unswerving truth—of Divine self-devotion. The Cross! the Cross! We must have something of iron and hardness in our characters. The Cross tells us that is the true Beautiful which is Divine: an inward, not an outward beauty, which rejects and turns sternly away from the meretricious forms of the outward world, which have a corrupting or debilitating tendency.

IV. The worship of Humanity.

The Greek had strong human feelings and sympathies. He projected his own self on nature: humanized it: gave a human feeling to clouds, forests, rivers, seas.

In this he was a step above other idolatries. The Hindoo, for instance, worshipped monstrous emblems of physical power. Might: gigantic masses: hundred-handed deities, scarcely human, you find in Hindostan.

In Egypt, again, Life was the thing sacred. Hence all that had life was in a way divine: the sacred ibis, crocodile, bull, cat, snake. All that produced and all that ended life. Hence death too was sacred. The Egyptian lived in the contemplation of death. His coffin was made in his lifetime; his ancestors embalmed: the sacred animals preserved in myriad heaps through generations in mummy pits. The sovereign's tomb was built to last for, not centuries, but thousands of years.

The Greek was above this. It was not merely power, but human power: not merely beauty, but human beauty; not merely life, but human life, which was the object of his profoundest veneration. His effort therefore was, in his conception of his god, to realize a beautiful human being. And not the animal beauty of the human only: but the intelligence which informs and shines through beauty. All his life he was moulding into shape visions of earth—a glorious human being. Light under the conditions of humanity: the "sun in human limbs arrayed" was the central object of Grecian worship.

Much in this had a germ of truth—more was false. This principle, which is true, was evidently stated: The Divine, under the limitations of humanity, is the only worship of which man is capable. Demonstrably: for man cannot conceive that which is not in his own mind. He may worship what is below himself, or that which is in himself resembling God; but attributes of which from his own nature he has no conception, he clearly cannot adore.

The only question therefore is, *What* he shall reckon divine and in alliance with God? If power, then he worships as the Hindoo—If life, then as the Egyptian—If physical and intellectual beauty, then as the Greek.

Observe—they wanted some living image of God containing something more truly divine to supplant their own. For still, in spite of their versatile and multifarious conceptions, the illimitable Unknown remained: to which an altar stood in Athens. They wanted Humanity in its glory—they asked for a Son of Man.

Christ is Deity under the limitations of Humanity. But there is presented in Christ for worship, not power: nor beauty: nor physical life: but the moral image of God's perfections. Through the heart, and mind, and character of Jesus it was that the Divinest streamed. Divine *character*, that was given in Christ to worship.

Another error. The Greek worshipped *all* that was in man. Every feeling had its beauty, and its divine origin. Hence Thieving had its patron deity: and Treachery, and Cunning: and Lust had its temple erected for abominable worship. All that was human had its sanction in the example of some god.

Christ corrects. Not all that is human is divine. There is a part of our nature kindred with God: the strengthening of that, by mixture with God's spirit, is our true and proper humanity—regeneration of soul. There is another part whereby we are related to the brutes: our animal propensities: our lower inclinations, our corrupted will. And whoever lives in that, and

strengthens that, sinks not to the level of the brutes, but below them, to the level of the demons: for he uses an immortal spirit to degrade himself: and the immortal joined with evil, as the life to the body, is demoniacal.

In conclusion, remark: In all this system one thing was wanting—the sense of sin. The Greek worshipped the beautiful—adored the human—deified the world: of course this worship found no place for sin. The Greek would not have spoken to you of sin: he would have told you of departure from a right line; want of moral harmony: discord within: he would have said that the music of your soul was out of tune. Christ came to convince the world of sin. And after Him that deep cloud began to brood upon the hearts of Christendom, which rests upon the conscience which has been called into vitality of action and susceptibility.

For this Greece had no remedy. The universe has no remedy but one. There is no prescription for the sickness of the heart, but that which is written in the Redeemer's blood.

XII.

Preached December 13, 1849.

SECOND ADVENT LECTURE.

THE ROMAN.

ROMANS i. 14–16.—"I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians, both to the wise and to the unwise. So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

THE Advent of Christ is the gulf which separates ancient from modern history. The dates B.C. and A.D. are not arbitrary but real division. His coming is the crisis of the world's history. It was the moment from whence light streamed into the realms of darkness, and life descended into the regions of the grave. It was the new birth of worn-out humanity.

Last Thursday we considered the effects of this Advent on Greece. We found the central principle of Grecian life to be worldliness. The Greek saw, sought, and worshipped nothing higher than this life, but only this life itself. Hence Greek religion degenerated into mere Taste, which is perception of the Beautiful. The

result on character was threefold:—Restlessness, which sent the Greek through this world with his great human heart unsatisfied, fickle in disposition, and ever inquiring, with insatiable curiosity, after some new thing. Licentiousness; for whosoever attaches his heart to the outward Beauty, without worshipping chiefly in it that moral Beauty of which all else is but the type and suggestion, necessarily, slowly it may be, but inevitably, sinks down and down into the deepest abyss of sensual existence. Lastly, Unbelief. The Greek, seeing principally this world, lost his hold upon the next. For the law of faith is, that a man can only believe what is already in his spirit. He believes as he is. The Apostle Paul writes in astonishment to these Greeks (of Corinth), "How say some among you there is no resurrection of the dead?" But the thing was explicable. Paul was "dying daily." The outward life decayed: the inner grew and lived with more vitality every day. He *felt* the life to come in which he believed. But the Corinthians, leading an easy, luxurious life—How could it be a reality to them? How could *they* believe in immortality, in whom the immortal scarcely stirred, or only feebly?

To these the apostle felt bound to preach the living Gospel. "I am debtor to the Greeks."

To-day, we turn to the Roman nation, its religion, and its life. At the time of which the New Testament speaks, Greece had been nearly a century and a half a province of Rome. In the language of Daniel, the kingdom of brass had given way to the kingdom of iron.

The physical might of Rome had subdued Greece, but the mind of Greece had mastered Rome. The Greeks became the teachers of their conquerors. The deities of Greece were incorporated into the national faith of Rome. Greek literature became the education of the Roman youth. Greek philosophy was almost the only philosophy the Roman knew. Rome adopted Grecian arts, and was insensibly moulded by contact with Grecian life. So that the world in name and government was Roman, but in feeling and civilization Greek.

If, therefore, we would understand Roman life, we must contemplate it at an earlier period, when it was free from Greek influence, and purely exhibited its own idiosyncracies.

The nation which we contemplate to-day was a noble one—humanly, one of the noblest that the world has seen. Next to the Jewish, the very highest. We may judge from the fact of St. Paul's twice claiming his Roman citizenship, and feeling the indignation of a Roman citizen at the indignity of chastisement. And this, too, in an age when the name had lost its brightness: when a luxurious, wealthy Greek could purchase his freedom. Claudius Lysias bought it "with a large sum of money." And yet we may conceive what it had been once, when even the faint lustre of its earlier dignity could inspire a foreigner, and that foreigner a Jew, and that Jew a Christian, with such respect.

At the outset, then, we have a rare and high-minded people and their life to think of. They who have

imbibed the spirit of its writers from their youth can neither speak nor think of it without enthusiasm. Scarcely can we forbear it even in the pulpit. Nor is this an unchristian feeling, earthly, to be checked: for, in order to elevate Christianity, it is not necessary to vilify heathenism. To exalt revelation, we need not try to show that natural religion has no truths. To exhibit the blessings of the Advent, it is not needful to demonstrate that man was brutalized without it. It is a poor, cowardly system which can only rise by the degradation of all others. Whatever is true belongs to the kingdom of the Truth. The purer the creed—the higher the character—the nobler the men who, without revelation, signally failed at last, the more absolute is the necessity of a Redeemer, and the more are we constrained to refer, gratefully, all blessings to His Advent.

We take three points:—the public and private life of Rome, and its moral and inevitable decay at last.

I. The public life of Rome.

First, I notice the spirit of its religion. The very word shows what that was. *Religion,* a Roman word, means obligation, a binding power. Very different from the corresponding Greek expression, which implies worship by a sensuous ceremonial (threskeia).

The Roman began, like the Jew, from Law. He started from the idea of Duty. But there was an important difference. The Jew was taught duty or obedience to the Law of a personal, holy God. The

Roman obeyed, as his Etruscan ancestors taught him, a Fate or Will; and with very different results. But at present we only observe the lofty character of the early religion which resulted from such a starting-point.

The early history of Rome is wrapped in fable; but the fable itself is worth much, as preserving the spirit of the old life when it does not preserve the facts. Accordingly, the tradition taught that the building of Rome was done in obedience to the intimations of the Will of Heaven. It was rebuilt in a site selected not by human prudence, but by a voice divinely guided. Its first great legislator (Numa) is represented as giving laws, not from a human heart, but after secret communion with the Superhuman. It was the belief of Roman writers that the early faith taught access to God only through the mind: that therefore no images, but only temples, were found in Rome during the first two centuries of her existence. No bloody sacrifices defiled the city. War itself was a religious act; solemnly declared by a minister of religion casting a spear into the enemy's territory. Nay, we even find something in spirit resembling the Jewish sabbath: the command that during the rites of religion no traffic should go on, nor workman's hammer break the consecrated silence, but that men should devoutly contemplate God.

Here was a high, earnest, severe Religion.

Now this resulted in Government, as its highest earthly expression. Duty: and therefore Law on earth, as a copy of the Will of Heaven. Different nations

seem, consciously or unconsciously, destined by God to achieve different missions. The Jew had the highest: to reveal to the world holiness. The Oriental stands as a witness to the reality of the Invisible above the visible. The Greek reminded the world of Eternal Beauty; and the destiny of the Roman seems to have been to stamp upon the minds of mankind the ideas of Law, Government, Order.

Beauty was not the object of the Roman contemplation, nor worship; nor was harmony. The taste for them might be taught, superinduced; but it was not natural. It was not indigenous to the soil of his nature. Hence, when Greece was reduced to a Roman province, in 146 B.C., the Roman soldiers took the noblest specimens of Grecian painting and converted them into gambling-tables.

You may distinguish the difference of the two characters from the relics which they have left behind them. The Greek produced a statue or a temple, the expression of a sentiment. The Roman, standing upon visible Fact, dealing with the practical, and living in the actual life of men, has left behind him works of public usefulness: noble roads which intersect empires —mighty aqueducts—bridges—enormous excavations for draining cities, at which we stand astonished: and, above all, that system of Law, the slow result of ages of experience, which has so largely entered into the modern jurisprudence of most European nations.

One of their own writers has distinctly recognised this destiny (Virgil). "It is for others to work brass

into breathing shape—others may be more eloquent—or describe the circling movements of the heavens, and tell the rising of the stars. Thy work, O Roman! is to rule the nations: these be thine acts: to impose the conditions of the world's peace: to show mercy to the fallen: and to crush the proud."

In accordance with this, it is a characteristic fact that we find the *institutions* of Rome referred to inspiration. Not a decalogue of private duties; but a code of municipal laws. And, turning to the page of Scripture, whenever the Roman comes prominently forward, we always find him the organ of law, the instrument of public rule and order. Pilate has no idea of condemning unjustly: "Why, what evil hath He done?" But he yields at the mention of the source of Law, the Emperor. The Apostle Paul appeals to Cæsar: and even a corrupt Festus respects the appeal: "Unto Cæsar thou shalt go." Nor could even the prisoner's innocence reverse his own appeal: "This man might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar." The tumult at Ephesus is stilled by a hint of Roman interference: "We are in danger of being called in question for this day's uproar." When the angry crowd at Athens, and the equally angry mob of the Sanhedrim, was about to destroy Paul, again the Roman Claudius Lysias comes "with an army, and rescues him."

It was always the same thing. The Roman seems almost to have existed to exhibit on earth a copy of the Divine order of the universe, the law of the heavenly hierarchies.

II. Private Life.

We observe the sanctity of the domestic ties. Very touching are all the well-known anecdotes. That, for instance, of the noble Roman matron, who felt, all spotless as she was, life-dishonoured, and died by her own hand. The sacredness of home was expressed strongly by the idea of two guardian deities (Lares and Penates) who watched over it. A Roman's own fireside and hearthstone were almost the most sacred spots on earth. There was no battle-cry that came so to his heart as that, "For the altar and the hearth." How firmly this was rooted in the nation's heart is plain from the tradition, that for 170 years no separation took place by law between those who had been once united in wedlock.

There is deep importance in this remark; for it was to this that Rome owed her greatness. The whole fabric of the Commonwealth rose out of the family. The Family was the nucleus round which all the rest agglomerated. First the family: then the clan, made up of the family and its dependents or clients: then the tribe: lastly, the nation. And so the noble structure of the Roman Commonwealth arose, compacted and morticed together, but resting on the foundation of the hearthstone.

Very different is it in the East. A nation is a collection of units, held together by a government. There is a principle of cohesion in them: but only such cohesion as belongs to the column of sand, supported by the whirlwind: when the blast ceases, the atoms fall asunder. When the chief is slain or murdered, the

nation is in anarchy — the family does not exist. Polygamy and infanticide, the bane of domestic life, are the destruction, too, of national existence.

There is a solemn lesson in this. Moral decay in the family is the invariable prelude to public corruption. It is a false distinction which we make between public integrity and private honour. The man whom you cannot admit into your family, whose morals are corrupt, cannot be a pure statesman. Whoever studies history will be profoundly convinced that a nation stands or falls with the sanctity of its domestic ties. Rome mixed with Greece, and learned her morals. The Goth was at her gates; but she fell not till she was corrupted and tainted at the heart. The domestic corruption preceded the political. When there was no longer purity on her hearthstones, nor integrity in her senate, then, and not till then, her death-knell was wrung.

We will bless God for our English homes. Partly the result of our religion. Partly the result of the climate which God has given us, according to the law of compensation by which physical evil is repaid by moral blessing; so that, its gloom and darkness making life more necessarily spent within doors than it is among continental nations, our life is domestic and theirs is social. When England shall learn domestic maxims from strangers, as Rome from Greece, her ruin is accomplished. And this blessing, too, comes from Christ —who presided at the marriage feast at Cana, who found a home in the family of Nazareth, and consecrated the hearthstone with everlasting inviolability.

Let us break up this private life into particulars.

1. We find manly courage. This too is preserved in a word. Virtue is a Roman word—manhood, courage; for courage, manhood, virtue, were one word. Words are fossil thoughts: you trace the ancient feeling in that word—you trace it, too, in the corruption of the word. Among the degenerate descendants of the Romans, *virtue* no longer means manhood: it it simply dilettantism. The decay of life exhibits itself in the debasement even of words.

We dwell on this courage, because it was not merely animal daring. Like everything Roman, it was connected with religion. It was duty: obedience to will: self-surrender to the public good. The Roman legions subdued the world: but it was not their discipline alone; nor their strength; nor their brute daring. It was rather, far, their moral force—a nation whose legendary and historical heroes could thrust their hand into the flame, and see it consumed without a nerve shrinking: or come from captivity on parole, advise their countrymen against peace, and then go back to torture and certain death: or devote themselves by solemn self-sacrifice (like the Decii), who could bid sublime defiance to pain and count dishonour the only evil. The world must bow before such men; for, unconsciously, here was a form of the spirit of the Cross: Self-surrender, unconquerable fidelity to duty, sacrifice for others. And so far as Rome had in her that spirit, and so long as she had it, her career was the career of all those who in

any form, even the lowest, take up the Cross: she went forth conquering and to conquer.

2. Deep as Roman greatness was rooted in the courage of her men, it was rooted deeper still in the honour of her women. I take one significant fact, which exhibits national feeling. There was a fire in Rome called Eternal, for ever replenished. It was the type and symbol of the duration of the Republic. This fire was tended by the Vestals: a beautifully significant institution. It implied that the duration of Rome was co-extensive with the preservation of her purity of morals. So long as the dignity of her matrons and her virgins remained unsullied, so long she would last. No longer. Female chastity guarded the Eternal City.

Here we observe something anticipative of Christianity. In the earlier ages after the Advent there were divine honours paid to the Queen of Heaven: and the land was covered over with houses set apart for celibacy. Of course, rude and gross minds can find plenty to sneer at in that institution; and doubtless the form of the truth was mistaken enough, as all mere *forms* of doctrine are. But the heart of truth which lay beneath all that superstition was a precious one. It was this. So long as purity of heart, delicacy of feeling, chastity of life, are found in a nation, so long that nation is great —no longer. Personal purity is the divinest thing in man and woman. It is the most sacred truth which the church of Christ is commissioned to exhibit and proclaim.

Upon these virtues I observe:—The Roman was conspicuous for the virtues of this earth. Honour,

fidelity, courage, chastity, all manliness; yet the apostle felt that he had a Gospel to preach to them that were in Rome also. Moral virtues are not religious graces. There are two classes of excellence. There are men whose lives are full of moral principle, and there are others whose feelings are strongly devotional. And, strange to say, each of these is found at times disjoined from the other. Men of almost spotless earthly honour, who scarcely seem to know what reverence for things heavenly and devout aspirations towards God mean. Men who have the religious instinct, pray with fervour, kindle with spiritual raptures, and yet are impure in their feelings, and fail in matters of common truth and honesty. Each of these is but a half man: dwarfed and stunted in his spiritual growth. The "perfect man in Christ Jesus," who has grown to the "measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ," is he who has united these two things: who, to the high Roman virtues which adorn this earth, has added the sublimer feelings which are the investiture of heaven: in whom "justice, mercy, truth," are but the body of which the soul is faith and love.

Yet observe—these are moral virtues, and morality is not religion. Still, beware of depreciating them. Beware of talking contemptuously of "mere morality." If we must choose between two things which ought never to be divided, moral principle and religious sentiment, there is no question which most constitutes the character "which is not far from the kingdom of heaven." Devout feelings are common enough in

childhood: religious emotions: religious warmth: instances of which are retailed by the happy parent: common enough, too, in grown men and women—but listen—those devout feelings, separate from high principle, do not save from immorality: nay, I do believe, are the very stepping-stone towards it. When the sensual is confounded with and mistaken for the spiritual; and merely devout warmth is the rich, rank soil of heart in which moral evil most surely and most rankly grows—you will not easily build Roman virtues upon *that*. But high principle, which is, in other words, the baptism of John, is the very basis on which is most naturally raised the superstructure of religious faith. Happy, thrice happy he who begins with the law and ends with the gospel.

III. The decline of Roman Life.

1. First came corruption of the moral character. The Roman worldliness was of a kind far higher than the Grecian. In his way the Roman really had the world's good at heart. There was a something invisible at which he aimed. Invisible justice—invisible order—invisible right. Still it was only the law on earth: the well-being of this existence. And whatever is only of this earth is destined to decay. The soul of the Roman, bent on this world's affairs, became secularized, then animalized, and so at last, when there was little left to do, pleasure became his aim, as it had been the Grecian's. Then came ruin swiftly. When the emperors lived for their elaborately contrived life of luxury—

when the Roman soldier left his country's battles to be fought by mercenaries—the doom of Rome was sealed. Yet, because it was a nobler worldliness, less sensual and less selfish, the struggle with decay was more protracted than in Greece. Lofty spirits rose to stem the tide of corruption; and the death-throes of Rome were long and terrible. She ran a mighty career of a thousand years.

2. Scepticism and superstition went hand in hand.—An example of the former we have in Pilate's question, "What is truth?" An example of the latter in the superstitious belief of the inhabitants of Lystra, that Paul and Barnabas were "Gods come to them in the likeness of men." And this probably was a tolerably accurate picture of the state of Roman feeling. The lower classes sunk in a debased superstition—the educated classes, too intellectual to believe in it, and having nothing better to put in its stead. Or perhaps there was also a superstition which is only another name for scepticism; infidelity trembling at its self: shrinking from its own shadow. There is a fearful question for which the soul must find an answer: the mystery of its own being and destinies. Men looked into their own souls, and listening, heard only an awful silence there. No response came from the world without. Philosophy had none to give. And then men, terrified at the progress of infidelity, more than half distrusting their own tendencies, took refuge in adding superstition to superstition. They brought in the gods of Greece, and Egypt, and the East: as if multiplying the objects

of reverence strengthened the spirit of reverence in the soul; as if every new sacredness was a barrier between them and the dreadful abyss of uncertainty into which they did not dare to look.

This is as true now as then. Superstition is the refuge of a sceptical spirit, which has a heart too devout to dare to be sceptical. Men tremble at new theories, new views, the spread of infidelity: and they think to fortify themselves against these by multiplying the sanctities which they reverence. But all this will not do. Superstition cannot do the work of faith, and give repose or peace. It is not by multiplying ceremonies—it is not by speaking of holy things with low, bated breath—it is not by intrenching the soul behind the infallibility of a church, or the infallibility of the words and sentences of a book—it is not by shutting out inquiry, and resenting every investigation as profane, that you can arrest the progress of infidelity. Faith, not superstition, is the remedy. There is a grand fearlessness in faith. He who in his heart of hearts reverences the Good—the True—the Holy; that is, reverences God—does not tremble at the apparent success of attacks upon the outworks of his faith. They may shake those who rested on those outworks—they do not move him, whose soul reposes on the Truth itself. He needs no props or crutches to support his faith. He does not need to multiply the objects of his awe in order to keep dreadful doubt away. Founded on a Rock, Faith can afford to gaze undismayed at the approaches of Infidelity.

3. In Rome, religion degenerated into allegiance to

the state. In Greece, as it has been truly said, it ended in taste. In Rome, it closed with the worship of the emperor. Nothing shows the contrast between Greek and Roman feeling more strongly than this. In Greece, the poet became the prophet, and the artist was the man divinely inspired. In Rome, the deification of the emperor, as the symbol of Government, was the point towards which, unsuspected, but by a sure and inevitable consecutiveness, the national feeling for ages had been tending.

And the distinction between the Christian and the Roman tone of feeling is no less strikingly contrasted in the very same allegiance. Sacrament perhaps is the highest word of symbolical life in both. It is a Roman word. In Rome it meant an oath of allegiance to the senate and Roman people. Nothing higher the Roman knew. In the Christian Church it is also the oath of highest fidelity; but its import there is this: "Here we offer and present unto thee, *O Lord*, ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a lively sacrifice."

In this contrast of the sacramental vows were perceptible the different tendencies of the two starting points of revealed religion and Roman, as remarked before. Judaism began from law or obligation to a holy Person. Roman religion began from obedience to a mere will. Judaism ended in Christianity; whose central principle is joyful surrender to One whose name is Love. The religion of Rome ended, among the nobler, as Cato and the Antonines, in the fatalism of a sublime but loveless Stoicism, whose essential spirit is submission to a

Destiny: among the ordinary men, in mere zeal for the state, more or less earthly. It stiffened into Stoicism, or degenerated in public spirit.

4. The last step we notice is the decline of Religion into expediency. It is a startling thing to see men protecting popular superstitions which they despise: taking part with solemn gravity in mummeries which in their heart they laugh at. Yet such, we are told, was the state of things in Rome. It is a trite and often-quoted observation of a great Roman, that one minister of religion could scarcely meet another without a smile upon his countenance, indicating consciousness of a solemn mockery. And an instance of this, I believe, we have in the Acts of the Apostles. The town-clerk or magistrate of Ephesus stilled the populace by a kind of accommodation to their prejudices, much in the same way in which a nurse would soothe a passionate child. Apparently, as we are told, he belonged to the friends of Paul; and we can scarcely forbear a smile at the solemn gravity with which he assures the people that there could be no doubt that the image fell down from Jupiter: no question throughout all Asia and the world about the greatness of the "great goddess Diana."

For there were cultivated minds which had apprehended some of the truths of Christianity: philosophers who were enlightened far beyond their age. But a line of martyred philosophers had made them cautious. They made a compromise. They enjoyed their own light, kept silence, and left the rest in darkness. The result was destruction of their own moral being; for the law of

truth is that it cannot be shut up without becoming a dead thing, and mortifying the whole nature. Not the truth which a man knows, but that which he says and lives, becomes the soul's life. Truth cannot bless except when it is lived for, proclaimed and suffered for.

This was the plan of the enlightened when the Saviour came. And this is the lowest step of a nation's fall, when the few who know the truth refuse to publish it. When governments patronise superstition as a mere engine for governing: when the ministers of religion only half believe the dogmas which they teach, dare not even say to one another what they feel and what they doubt, when they dare not be true to their convictions, for fear of an Ephesian mob.

Therefore it was necessary that One should come who should be True: the Truest of all that are woman-born: whose life was Truth: who from Everlasting had been The Truth. It was necessary that he should come to preach the gospel to the poor, to dare to say to the people some truths which the philosophers dared not say, and other truths of which no philosopher had dreamed. The penalty of that true Life was the Sacrifice which is the world's Atonement. Men saw the Mortal die. But others saw the Immortal rise to take His place at the right hand of Power: and the spirit which has been streaming out ever since from that Life and Death is the world's present Light, and shall be its everlasting Life.

XIII.

Preached December 20, 1849.

THIRD ADVENT LECTURE.

THE BARBARIAN.

Acts xxviii. 1-7.—"And when they were escaped, then they knew that the island was called Melita. And the barbarous people showed us no little kindness: for they kindled a fire, and received us every one, because of the present rain, and because of the cold. And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the heat, and fastened on his hand. And when the Barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on his hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live. And he shook off the beast into the fire, and felt no harm. Howbeit they looked when he should have swollen, or fallen down dead suddenly: but after they had looked a great while, and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds, and said that he was a god. In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously."

Of the four divisions of the world at the time of the Advent, two have already been reviewed. The Greek, seeing the right only on its side of beauty, ended in mere intellectual refinement. The artist took the place

of God, and genius stood for Inspiration. The Roman's destiny was different. His was not the kingdom of burnished brass, but the kingdom of iron. He set out with the great idea of Duty and Law: exhibited in consequence the austere simplicity of pure domestic life: in public affairs, Government and Order, stamping upon the world the great idea of Obedience to Law. In the decline of Rome the results of this were manifest. After a mighty career of a thousand years, Rome had run out her course. Among the loftier minds who stood out protesting against her corruption, and daring in a corrupted age to believe in the superiority of Right to enjoyment, grand contempt for pleasure, sublime defiances of pain told out the dying agonies of the iron kingdom, worthy of the heart of steel which beat beneath the Roman's robe. This was Stoicism: the Grecian philosophy which took deepest root, as might have been expected, in the soil of Roman thought. Stoicism was submission to a destiny: hard, rigid, loveless submission. Its language was Must—It must be: and man's highest manliness is to submit to the inevitable. It is right because it must be so. Besides these higher ones, there were others who carried out the idea of Duty in quite another direction. With the mass of the nation, reverence for Law passed into homage to the symbol of Law; loyalty to the government: its highest expression being the sacramental homage to the nation's authority. So that, as I have already said, the Roman spirit stiffened into stoicism, and degenerated into worship of the emperor. This was not accidental; it was the

inevitable result of the Idea. It might have taken half the time: or ten times as long: but at last the germ must have ripened into that fruit and no other. The Roman began with obedience to Will.

Law, meaning obedience to a holy God, passes by a natural transition into the gospel: that is, reverential duty to a person becomes the obedience of love at last, which obeys because the beautifulness of obedience is perceived. The Jew began in severity: ended in beauty. The Roman began in severity: ended in rigidity; or else relaxation. To him the Advent came proclaiming the Lord of Love instead of the coercive necessity of a lifeless fate.

To the Greek worshipper of beauty, the Advent came with an announcement of an inner beauty. He who was to them, and all such, "a Root out of a dry ground, with no form or comeliness," with nothing to captivate a refined taste, or gratify an elegant sensibility, lived a life which was divine and beautiful. His religion, as contrasted with the Grecian, supplementing it, and confirming in it what was true, "was the worship of the Lord in the Beauty of Holiness."

The third department is the necessity of the Advent for the *Barbarian* world.

By Barbarian was meant any religion but the Roman or the Greek—a contemptuous term, the spirit of which is common enough in all ages. Just as now every narrow sect monopolizes God, claims for itself an exclusive heaven, contemptuously looks on all the rest of mankind as sitting in outer darkness, and complacently

consigns myriads whom God has made, to His uncovenanted mercies, that is, to probable destruction; so, in ancient times, the Jew scornfully designated all nations but his own as Gentiles: and the Roman and Greek, each retaliating in his way, treated all nations but his own under the common epithet of Barbarians.

We shall confine ourselves to-day to a single case of Barbarian life. We shall not enter into the religion of our own ancestors, the Kelts and Teutonic nations, who were barbarians then: nor that of the Scythians or the Africans. One instance will be sufficient.

Twice in his recorded history, St. Paul came in contact with Barbarians—twice he was counted as a god. Once among the semi-barbarians of Lycaonia, at Lystra—once here, at Melita.

There is a little uncertainty about the identification of this Melita. It was a name shared by two islands—Malta, and Melida in the Adriatic. But it seems to be established beyond all reasonable doubt that it was on Malta, not on Melida, that St. Paul was wrecked. The chief objection to this view is, that immediately before the wreck we are told—chap. xxvii. 27—that they were "driven up and down in Adria." But this is satisfactorily answered by the fact, that the name Adriatic was applied often loosely to all the sea round Sicily. Two great arguments in favour of Malta then remain: After leaving the island, the apostle touched at Syracuse, and so went on to Rhegium and Puteoli. This is the natural direction from Malta to Rome, but not from Melida. Then, besides, "barbarians" will not apply to

the inhabitants of Melida. They were Greeks: whereas the natives of Malta, living under Roman government, were originally Carthaginians, who had been themselves a Phœnician colony. The epithet is perfectly correct as applied to them.

It is the Carthaginian or Phœnician religion, then, which moulded the barbarian life, that we examine to-day. We take three points.

I. Barbarian virtues.
II. Barbarian idea of retribution.
III. Barbarian conception of Deity.

I. Barbarian virtues.

Two errors have been held on the subject of natural goodness. The first, that of those who deny to fallen man any goodness at all; and refuse to admit even kindliness of feeling. In the language of a celebrated and popular expounder of this view, "man in his natural state is one-half beast and one-half devil." This is the effect of a system. No man in his heart believes that. No mother ever gazed upon her child, baptized or unbaptized, and thought so. Men are better than their creed. Their hearts are more than a match for their false theological system. Beneath the black skin of the African there runs a blood as warm as that which is in the blue veins of the Christian. Among the civilized heathen, the instinctive feelings are as kindly and as exquisitely delicate as they were ever found in the bosom of the baptized. Accordingly, we find here

these natural barbarian virtues of hospitality and sympathy. The shipwrecked mariners, wet and cold, were received in Melita with a warm, compassionate welcome. The people of the island did not *say*, "Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled." They gave them those things which were necessary for the body. And a Christian contemplating this, gave this distinct testimony, "The barbarous people showed us no little kindness."

The second error is the opposite one of placing too high a value on these natural virtues. There is a class of writers who talk much of early unsophisticated times. They tell of the days "when wild in woods the noble savage ran." They speak of pastoral simplicity, and the reverence and piety of mountain life. According to them, civilization is the great corrupter. But the truth is, the natural good feelings of human nature are only instincts: no more moral than a long sight or a delicate sense of hearing. The keen feelings of the child are no guarantee of future principle: perhaps rather the reverse. The profuse hospitality of the mountaineer, who rarely sees strangers, and to whom gold is little worth, becomes shrewd and selfish calculation so soon as temptation from passing traffic is placed in his way. You may travel among savages who treat you, as a stranger, with courtesy: but yet feed on the flesh of their enemies. And these Melitans, who "showed no little kindness" to the wrecked crew, belonged to a stock who, in the most civilized days of Carthage, offered human sacrifice, and after every

successful battle with the Romans, burnt the chief prisoners alive as a thank-offering to heaven. If we trace them still further back, we find their Phœnician ancestors in the Old Testament tainted with the same practice, and the Hebrews themselves imbibing it from them, so as to be perpetually arraigned by their prophets on the charge of making their sons and daughters "pass through the fire to Baal." They could be kind to strangers: and cruel to enemies.

The Advent of Christ brought a new spirit into the world. "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." That was not the new part. The Melitans would not have disagreed with that . . . . "As I have loved you, that ye love one another." "As I have loved you" . . . . that makes all new. So also 1 John ii. 7, 8. The "old commandment" was old enough. Barbarians felt in their hearts. But the same commandment with "true light" shining on it was different indeed.

"Love your neighbour, hate your enemy." Carthaginians obeyed that. Hear the Law of Love expounded by Himself. Matt. v. 43, 44—"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. For if ye love them which love you, what do ye more than others? Do not even . . . (the barbarians) . . . the same?"

This is Christianity: that is, the Mind of Christ.

Remark, too, the principle on which this is taught. Matt v. 45—"That ye may be the children of your

Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Not upon merely personal authority; not by a law graven on stone: nor even printed in a book, to be referred to chapter and verse; but on the principle of the imitation of God. His heart interpreted the universe.—He read its "open secret," which is open to all who have the heart to feel it; secret to all others. A secret, according to Him, to be gathered from the rain as it fell on the just and the unjust, from the dew of heaven, from the lily, and from the fowls of the air, from the wheat, from every law and every atom. This was His Revelation. He revealed God. He spelled for us the meaning of all this perplexing unintelligible world. He proclaimed its hidden meaning to be Love. So He converted rude barbarian instincts into Christian graces, by expanding their sphere and purifying them of selfishness—causing them to be regulated by principle, and elevating them into a conscious imitation of God in His revealed character.

II. The Barbarian idea of retribution.

The apostle Paul was one of those who are formed to be the leaders of the world. Foremost in persecution—foremost in Christianity, ("nothing behind the chiefest apostles")—foremost in the shipwreck, his voice the calmest, his heart the stoutest, his advice the wisest in the tumult. Foremost, too, when all was over, not as a prisoner, but actively engaged for the general good, it is Paul who is gathering the sticks to make the fire.

From those sticks a viper sprung and fastened on his hand, and the first impression of the barbarians was, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live."

This is the very basis of all natural religion; the idea of the connection between guilt and retribution. In some form or other it underlies all mythologies. The sleepless, never-dying avengers of wrong—the Nemesis who presides over retribution—the vengeance which suffereth not the murderer to live—the whips and scorpions of the Furies—it seems the first instinct of religion.

In the barbarian conception of it, however, there was something gross, corporeal, and dangerous.

Because they misinterpreted natural laws into vengeance. Yet there is a proneness in man to judge so. We expect that nature will execute the chastisements of the spiritual world. Hence all nature becomes to the imagination leagued against the transgressor. The stars in their courses fight against Sisera. The wall of Siloam falls on guilty men. The sea will not carry the criminal, nor the plank bear him—the viper stings—everything is a minister of wrath. On this conviction nations constructed their trial by ordeal. The guilty man's sword would fail in the duel; and the foot would strike and be burnt by the hot ploughshare. Some idea of this sort lurks in all our minds. We picture to ourselves the spectres of the past haunting the nightly bed of the tyrant. We take for granted that there is an avenger making life miserable.

But experience corrects all this. The tyrant's sleep is often as sweet and sound as the infant's. The sea will wreck an apostle and bear a murderer triumphantly. The viper stings the innocent turf-cutter. The fang of evil pierces the heel of the noblest as he treads it down. It is the poetry of man's heart, not the reality of the universe, which speaks of the Vengeance which pursues guilt with unrelenting steps to slay. Only in poetry is this form of justice found. Only in poetry does the fire refuse to burn the innocent. Only in poetry can Purity lay her hand on the fawning lion's mane. If we ask where these Melitans got their idea of Retribution, the reply is, out of their own hearts. They felt the eternal connection between wrong-doing and penalty. The penalty they would have executed on murder was death. They naturally threw this idea of theirs into the character of God, and blended together what was theirs and what is His. Valuable as a proof of the instinctive testimony of man's heart to the realities of Retribution. Utterly worthless as a testimony to the form in which Retributive Justice works, because not borne out by the facts of life.

Again, that notion was false, in that it expected vengeance for flagrant crime only. "This man is a murderer." There is a common and superstitious feeling now to that effect, "Murder will out:" as if God had set a black mark on murder—as if, because it is unlikely to escape detection in a country where every man's hand is against the murderer, impunity was not common enough in countries where human life is held

cheap. The truth is, we think much of crime, little of sin. There is many a murderer executed whose heart is pure and whose life is white compared with those of many a man who lives a respectable and even honoured life. David was a murderer. The Pharisees had committed no crime; but their heart was rotten at the core. There was in it the sin which has no forgiveness. It is not a Christian but a Barbarian estimate which ranks crime above sin, and takes murder for the chief of sins marked out for Heaven's vengeance.

As information increases, *this* idea of retribution disappears. Natural laws are understood, and retribution vanishes. Then comes Epicureanism or Atheism. "All things come alike to all: there is one end to the righteous and to the sinner; to the clean and to the unclean: to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not." This is the feeling of the voluptuary of Ecclesiastes. If so, then the inference suggests itself to Epicurean indolence. "Let us eat and drink"—it is all the same. Or the sceptical feeling comes thus: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency." For assuredly there is no vengeance such as this which suffers not the murderer to live, but arms the powers of nature against him. Why do right instead of wrong?

Then the idea of Retribution is gone for those who see no deeper than the outward chance of penalty.

The Advent brought deeper and truer views. It taught what sin is, and what suffering is. It showed the Innocent on the Cross bearing the penalty of the

world's sin, but Himself the Son of God, with whom the Father was not angry, but "well pleased."

The penal agonies of sin are chiefly those which are executed within. "Vengeance," said the *Melitans*, "suffereth not the murderer to live." "Whosoever slayeth Cain," said *God*, "vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold." Cain, the murderer, lives—*Christ*, the holy, dies. Cain is to us the dread type of Hell. To live! *that* is Hell, to live when you fain would die. There is such a thing as being salted with fire, a never annihilating but still consuming torture. You may escape the viper and the wreck. You may by prudence make this world painless, more or less. You cannot escape yourself. Go where you will, you carry with you a soul degraded, its power lost, its finer sensibilities destroyed. Worse than the viper's tooth is the punishment of no longer striving after goodness, or aspiring after the life of God. Just as the man cannot see through the glass on which he breathes, sin darkens the windows of the soul. You cannot look out even to know the glories of the fair world from which your soul excludes itself. There is no punishment equal to the punishment of being base. To sink from sin to sin, from infamy to infamy, that is the fearful retribution which is executed in the spiritual world. You are safe, go where you will, from the viper: as safe as if you were the holiest of God's children. The fang is in your soul.

III. The Barbarian conception of Deity.

When the viper fell off, and Paul was left uninjured,

they changed their minds, and said that he was a god.

1. Observe, first, this implied a certain advance in religious notions. There is a stage of worship prior to that of man-worship. Man finds himself helpless among the powers of nature, and worships the forces themselves which he finds around him. This takes different forms. The highest is the worship of that host of heaven from which Job professed himself to be free. With some it is the adoration of lifeless things: the oak which has been made sacred by the lightning-stroke: the "meteoric stone" which fell down from Jupiter. So the Israelites adored the brazen serpent, with which power had once been in connection. Evidently there can be no holy influence in this. Men worship them by fear, fortify themselves by charms and incantations: do not try to please God by being holy, but defend themselves from danger by jugglery. The Christians of the early ages carried about bits of consecrated bread to protect themselves from shipwreck.

Besides this, men have worshipped brute life: some animal, exhibiting a limited quality, which is reckoned a type of the Divine. The hawk-eyed deities of Egypt, for instance, implied omniscience. Beast-worship was that of Egypt. Israel learned it there, and in an early stage of their history, imitated the highest form which they knew, that of Apis, in their golden calf.

It is quite clear that the Melitans were in a stage beyond this. It is a step when men rise from the worship of lifeless things to that of animals—another

when they rise to worship human qualities; for they *are* nearest the Divine. Perhaps a step higher still, when, like the early Romans, they worship a Principle like Destiny, separate from all shape. They were in the stage of worshipping what is human.

2. But in this worship of the human, we have to distinguish that it was the adoration of the Marvellous —not the reverence for the Good. It was not Paul's character to which they yielded homage. It was only to the wonderful mystery of, as they supposed, miraculous escape. So, too, at Lystra. It was the miracle which they chiefly saw.

All that would pass away when they knew that he was a man of like passions with themselves: or when they were informed that it was a Providential escape which might have happened to any ordinary man. When the savage sees the flash of European firearms, he kneels as to a god: but when he has learned its use, his new religion is gone. When the Americans first saw the winged ships of Spain, they thought that the deities spoke in thunder; but when they discovered the secret of their humanity, the worship ceased. And thus science is every day converting the religion of mere wonder into Atheism. The mere worship of the mysterious has a limited existence. As you teach laws, you undermine *that* religion. Men cease to tremble. The Laplander would no longer be awed by the eclipse if he knew how to calculate it with unerring accuracy. The savage's dread of lightning as the bolt of God is over, when he sees the Philosopher draw it from the clouds,

and experimentalize on it in his laboratory. The awe created by a pestilence is passed, when it is found to be strictly under the guidance of natural laws. And the Romanist, or the semi-Romanist, whose religion is chiefly a sense of the mysterious, the solemn, the awful, and whose flesh creeps when he sees a miracle in the consecration of the sacraments, ends, as is well known, in infidelity, when enlightenment and reason have struck the ground of false reverence from beneath his feet.

It is upon this indisputable basis that the mightiest system of modern Atheism has been built. The great founder of that system divides all human history into three periods. The first, in which the supernatural is believed in; and a personal Agent is believed in as the cause of all phenomena. The second, in which metaphysical abstractions are assumed as Causes. The third, the Positive stage, in which nothing is expected but the knowledge of sequences by Experience; the Absolute, that lies beneath all phenomena, being for ever unknowable, and a God, if there be a God, undiscoverable by the intellect of man.

This conclusion is irrefragable. Granted that the only basis of religion is awe, a worship of the marvellous —then, verily, there remains nothing for the human race to end in but blank and ghastly Atheism.

Therefore has the Redeemer's Advent taught a deeper truth to man. The Apostle Paul spoke almost slightingly of the marvellous. "Covet earnestly the best gifts: yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels,

and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." Love is diviner than all wondrous powers.

So, too, the Son of God came into this world, depreciating the merely mysterious. "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign. No sign shall be given to it." "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Nay, His own miracles themselves, so far as the merely wondrous in them was concerned, He was willing, on one occasion at least, to place on the same level with the real or supposed ones of Exorcists among themselves. "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out?" It was not the power, nor the supernatural in them, which proved them divine. It was their peculiar character; their benevolence: their goodness: their love, which manifested Deity.

Herein lies the vast fallacy of the French sceptic. The worship of the supernatural must legitimately end in Atheism as science progresses. Yes, all science removes the Cause of causes further and further back from human ken,—so that the baffled intellect is compelled to confess at last we cannot find It. But "the world by wisdom knew not God." There is a power in the soul, quite separate from the intellect, which sweeps away or recognises the marvellous, by which God is felt. Faith stands serenely far above the reach of the Atheism of Science. It does not rest on the Wonderful, but on the Eternal Wisdom and Goodness of God. The Revelation of the Son was to proclaim a Father, not a

Mystery. No science can sweep away the everlasting Love which the *heart* feels, and which the intellect does not even pretend to judge or recognise. And he is safe from the inevitable decay which attends the mere barbarian worship, who has felt, that as faith is the strongest power in the mind of man, so is Love the Divinest principle in the bosom of God: in other words, who adores God known in Christ, rather than trembles before the Unknown: whose homage is yielded to Divine Character rather than Divine Power.

XIV.

Preached December 5, 1849.

THE PRINCIPLE OF THE SPIRITUAL HARVEST.

GAL. vi. 7, 8.—"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

THERE is a close analogy between the world of nature and the world of spirit. They bear the impress of the same hand; and hence the principles of nature and its laws are the types and shadows of the Invisible. Just as two books, though on different subjects, proceeding from the same pen, manifest indications of the thought of one mind, so the worlds visible and invisible are two books written by the same finger, and governed by the same Idea. Or, rather, they are but one Book, separated into two only by the narrow range of our ken. For it is impossible to study the universe at all without perceiving that it is one system. Begin with what science you will, as soon as you get beyond the rudiments, you are constrained to associate it with another.

You cannot study agriculture long without finding that it absorbs into itself meteorology and chemistry:

sciences run into one another till you get the "connection of the sciences;" and you begin to learn that one Divine Idea connects the whole in one system of perfect Order.

It was upon this principle that Christ taught. Truths come forth from His lips not stated simply on authority, but based on the analogy of the universe. His human mind, in perfect harmony with the Divine Mind with which it mixed, discerned the connection of things, and read the Eternal Will in the simplest laws of Nature. For instance, if it were a question whether God would give His Spirit to them that asked, it was not replied to by a truth revealed on His *authority*; the answer was derived from facts lying open to all men's observation. "Behold the fowls of the air,"—"behold the lilies of the field,"—learn from them the answer to your question. A principle was there. God supplies the wants which He has created. He feeds the ravens—He clothes the lilies—He will feed with His Spirit the craving spirits of His children.

It was on this principle of analogy that St. Paul taught in this text. He tells us that there is a law in nature according to which success is proportioned to the labour spent upon the work. In kind and in degree—success is attained in kind; for example, he who has sowed his field with beechmast does not receive a plantation of oaks: a literary education is not the road to distinction in arms, but to success in letters: years spent on agriculture do not qualify a man to be an orator, but they make him a skilful farmer. Success, again, is proportioned to labour in degree: because,

ordinarily, as is the amount of seed sown, so is the harvest: he who studies much will know more than he who studies little. In almost all departments it is "the diligent hand which maketh rich."

The keen eye of Paul discerned this principle reaching far beyond what is seen, into the spiritual realm which is unseen. As tare-seed comes up tares, and wheat-seed wheat, and as the crop in both cases is in proportion to two conditions, the labour and the quantity committed to the ground—so in things spiritual, too, whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. Not something else, but "*that*." The proportion holds in kind—it holds too in degree, in spiritual things as in natural. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." If we could understand and rightly expound that principle, we should be saved from much of the disappointment and surprise which come from extravagant and unreasonable expectations. I shall try first to elucidate the principle which these verses contain, and then examine the two branches of the principle.

I. *The principle* is this, "God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

There are two kinds of good possible to men: one enjoyed by our animal being, the other felt and appreciated by our spirits. Every man understands more or less the difference between these two; between prosperity and well-doing; between indulgence and noble-

ness: between comfort and inward peace: between pleasure and striving after perfection: between happiness and blessedness. These are two kinds of Harvest; and the labour necessary for them respectively is of very different kinds. The labour which procures the harvest of the one has no tendency to secure the other.

We will not depreciate the advantages of this world. It is foolish and unreal to do so. Comfort, affluence, success, freedom from care, rank, station—these are in their real way goods; only, the labour bestowed upon them does not procure one single blessing that is spiritual.

On the other hand, the seed which is sown for a spiritual harvest has no tendency whatever to procure temporal well-being. Let us see what are the laws of the sowing and reaping in this department. Christ has declared them: "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled (with righteousness.)" "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." You observe the beatific vision of the Almighty—fulness of righteousness—comfort. There is nothing earthly—it is spiritual results for spiritual labour. It is not said that the pure in heart shall be made rich; nor that they who hunger after goodness shall be filled with bread; nor that they who mourn shall rise in life and obtain distinction. Each department has its own appropriate harvest—reserved exclusively to its own method of sowing.

Everything in this world has its price, and the price

buys *that*, not something else. Every harvest demands its own preparation, and that preparation will not produce another sort of harvest. Thus, for example, you cannot have at once the soldier's renown and the quiet of a recluse's life. The soldier pays his price for his glory—sows and reaps. His price is risk of life and limb, nights spent on the hard ground, a weather-beaten constitution. If you will not pay that price, you cannot have what he has—military reputation. You cannot enjoy the statesman's influence together with freedom from public notoriety. If you sensitively shrink from that, you must give up influence; or else pay his price, the price of a thorny pillow, unrest, the chance of being to-day a nation's idol, to-morrow the people's execration. You cannot have the store of information possessed by the student, and enjoy robust health: pay his price, and you have his reward. His price is an emaciated frame, a debilitated constitution, a transparent hand, and the rose taken out of the sunken cheek. To expect these opposite things: a soldier's glory and quiet—a statesman's renown and peace—the student's prize and rude health, would be to mock God, to reap what has not been sowed.

Now the mistakes men make, and the extravagant expectation in which they indulge, are these:—they sow for earth, and expect to win spiritual blessings; or they sow to the Spirit, and then wonder that they have not a harvest of the good things of earth. In each case they complain, What have I done to be treated so?

The unreasonableness of all this appears the moment we

have understood the conditions contained in this principle, "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he also reap."

It is a common thing to hear sentimental wonderings about the unfairness of the distribution of things here. The unprincipled get on in life: the saints are kept back. The riches and rewards of life fall to the lot of the undeserving. The rich man has his good things, and Lazarus his evil things. Whereupon it is taken for granted that there must be a future life to make this fair: that if there were none, the constitution of this world would be unjust. That is, that because a man who has sown to the Spirit does not reap to the flesh here, he will hereafter; that the meed of well-doing must be somewhere in the universe the same kind of recompense which the rewards of the unprincipled were here, comfort, abundance, physical enjoyment, or else all is wrong.

But if you look into it, the balance is perfectly adjusted even here. God has made his world much better than you and I could make it. Everything reaps its own harvest, every act has its own reward. And before you covet the enjoyment which another possesses, you must first calculate the cost at which it was procured.

For instance, the religious tradesman complains that his honesty is a hindrance to his success: that the tide of custom pours into the doors of his less scrupulous neighbours in the same street, while he himself waits for hours idle. My brother! do you think that God is going to reward honour, integrity, high-mindedness,

with this world's coin? Do you fancy that He will pay spiritual excellence with plenty of custom? Now, consider the price that man has paid for his success. Perhaps mental degradation and inward dishonour. His advertisements are all deceptive. His treatment of his workmen tyrannical: his cheap prices made possible by inferior articles. Sow that man's seed, and you will reap that man's harvest. Cheat, lie, advertise, be unscrupulous in your assertions, custom will come to you. But if the price is too dear, let him have his harvest, and take yours; yours is a clear conscience, a pure mind, rectitude within and without—Will you part with that for his? Then why do you complain? He has paid his price, you do not choose to pay it.

Again, it is not an uncommon thing to see a man rise from insignificance to sudden wealth by speculation. Within the last ten or twenty years, England has gazed on many such a phenomenon. In this case, as in spiritual things, the law seems to hold: He that hath, to him shall be given. Tens of thousands soon increase and multiply to hundreds of thousands. His doors are besieged by the rich and great. Royalty banquets at his table, and nobles court his alliance. Whereupon some simple Christian is inclined to complain: "How strange that so much prosperity should be the lot of mere cleverness!" Well, are these really God's chief blessings? Is it for such as these you serve Him? And would these indeed satisfy your soul? Would you have God reward his saintliest with these gauds and gewgaws—all this trash, rank, and wealth, and equipages,

and plate, and courtship from the needy great? Call you *that* the heaven of the holy? Compute now what was paid for that? The price that merchant prince paid, perhaps with the blood of his own soul, was shame and guilt. The price he is paying now, is perpetual dread of detection: or worse still, the hardness which can laugh at detection: or one deep lower yet, the low and grovelling soul which can be satisfied with these things as a Paradise, and ask no higher. He has reaped enjoyment—yes, and he has sown, too, the seed of infamy. It is all fair. Count the cost. "He that saveth his life shall lose it." Save your life if you like: but do not complain if you lose your nobler life—yourself: win the whole world: but remember you do it by losing your own soul. Every sin must be paid for: every sensual indulgence is a harvest, the price for which is so much ruin for the soul. "*God is not mocked.*"

Once more, Religious men in every profession are surprised to find that many of its avenues are closed to them. The conscientious churchman complains that his delicate scruples, or his bold truthfulness, stand in the way of his preferment: while another man, who conquers his scruples, or softens the eye of truth, rises, and sits down a mitred peer in Parliament. The honourable lawyer feels that his practice is limited, while the unprincipled practitioner receives all he loses; and the Christian physician feels sore and sad at perceiving that charlatanism succeeds in winning employment; or, if not charlatanism, at least, that affability and courtly manners take the place that is due to superior

knowledge. Let such men take comfort, and judge fairly. Popularity is one of the things of an earthly harvest, for which quite earthly qualifications are required. I say not always dishonourable qualifications: but a certain flexibility of disposition—a certain courtly willingness to sink obnoxious truths, and adapt ourselves to the prejudices of the minds of others: a certain adroitness at catching the tone of those with whom we are. Without some of these things no man can be popular in any profession. But you have resolved to be a liver—a doer—a champion of the truth. Your ambition is to be pure in the last recesses of the mind. You have your reward: a soul upright and manly—a fearless bearing, that dreads to look no man in the face—a willingness to let men search you through and through, and defy them to see any difference between what you seem and what you are. Now, your price—your price is dislike. The price of being true is the Cross. The warrior of the truth must not expect success. What have you to do with popularity? Sow for it, and you will have it. But if you wish for it, or wish for peace, you have mistaken your calling—you must not be a teacher of the truth—you must not cut prejudice against the grain—you must leave medical, legal, theological truth, to harder and nobler men, who are willing to take the martyr's cross, and win the martyr's crown. This is the mistake men make. They expect both harvests, paying only one price. They would be blessed with goodness and prosperity at once. They would have that on which they bestowed no

labour. They take sinful pleasure, and think it very hard that they must pay for it in agony, and worse than agony, souls deteriorated. They would monopolize heaven in their souls, and the world's prizes at the same time. This is to expect to come back, like Joseph's brethren from the land of plenty, with the corn in their sacks, and the money returned, too, in their sacks' mouths. No, no; it will not do. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked." Reap *what* you have sown. If you sow the wind, do not complain if your harvest is the whirlwind. If you sow to the Spirit, be content with a spiritual reward—invisible—within—more life and higher life.

II. Next, the two branches of the application of this principle.

First: He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. There are two kinds of life: one of the flesh—another of the spirit. Amidst the animal and selfish desires of our nature, there is a Voice which clearly speaks of Duty: Right: Perfection. This is the Spirit of Deity in Man—it is the life of God in the soul. This is the evidence of our divine parentage.

But there is a double temptation to live the other life instead of this. First, the desires of our animal nature are *keener* than those of our spiritual. The cry of Passion is louder than the calm voice of Duty. Next, the reward in the case of our sensitive nature is given *sooner*. It takes less time to amass a fortune than to become heavenly-minded. It costs less to indulge an

appetite than it does to gain the peace of lulled passion. And hence, when men feel that for the spiritual blessing, the bread must be cast upon the waters which shall not be found until after many days (scepticism whispers "never!"), it is quite intelligible why they choose the visible and palpable instead of the invisible advantage, and plan for an immediate harvest rather than a distant one.

The other life is that of the flesh. The "flesh" includes all the desires of our unrenewed nature—the harmless as well as sinful. Any labour, therefore, which is bounded by present wellbeing is *sowing* to the flesh: whether it be the gratification of an immediate impulse, or the long-contrived plan reaching forward over many years. Sowing to the flesh includes therefore,

1. Those who live in open riot. He sows to the flesh who pampers its unruly animal appetites. Do not think that I speak contemptuously of our animal nature, as if it were not human and sacred. The lowest feelings of our nature become sublime by being made the instruments of our nobler emotions. Love, self-command, will elevate them all: and to ennoble and purify, not to crush them, is the long, slow work of Christian life. Christ, says St. Paul, is the Saviour of the *Body*. But if, instead of subduing these to the life of the spirit, a man gives to them the rein and even the spur, the result is not difficult to foresee. There are men who do this. They "make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof." They whet the appetites by indulgence. They whip the jaded senses to their work.

Whatever the constitutional bias may be, anger, intemperance, epicurism, indolence, desires, there are societies, conversations, scenes, which supply fuel for the flame, as well as opposite ones which cut off the nutriment. Now, to indulge in these, knowing the result, is to foster the desire which brings forth the sin that ends in death. This is "sowing to the flesh."

If there be one to whom these words which I have used, veiled in the proprieties due to delicate reserve, are not without meaning, from this sentence of God's word let him learn his doom. He is looking forward to a harvest wherein he may reap the fruit of his present anticipations. And he *shall* reap it. He shall have his indulgence—he shall enjoy his guilty rapture—he shall have his unhallowed triumph: and the boon companions of his pleasures shall award him the meed of their applause. He has sown the seed: and in fair requital he shall have his harvest. It is all fair. He *shall* enjoy. But tarry awhile: the law hath yet another hold upon him. This deep law of the whole universe goes further. He has sown to the flesh, and of the flesh he has reaped pleasure: he has sown to the flesh, and of the flesh he shall reap corruption. That is, in his case, the ruin of the soul. It is an awful thing to see a soul in ruins: like a temple which once was fair and noble, but now lies overthrown, matted with ivy, weeds, and tangled briers, among which things noisome crawl and live. He shall reap the harvest of disappointment—the harvest of bitter, useless remorse. The crime of sense is avenged by sense, which wears by time. He

shall have the worm that gnaws, and the fire that is not quenched. He shall reap the fruit of long indulged desires, which have become tyrannous at last, and constitute him his own tormentor. His harvest is a soul in flames, and the tongue that no drop can cool. Passions that burn, and appetites that crave, when the power of enjoyment is gone. He has sowed to the flesh. "God is not mocked." The man reaps.

2. There is a less gross way of sowing to the flesh. There are men of sagacity and judgment in the affairs of this life, whose penetration is almost intuitive in all things where the step in question involves success or failure here. They are those who are called in the parable the children of this world, wise in their generation. They moralise and speculate about eternity: but do not plan for it. There is no seed sown for an invisible harvest. If they think they have sown for such a harvest, they might test themselves by the question, What would they lose if there were to be no eternity? For the children of God, so far as earth is concerned, "If in this life only they have hope in Christ, then are they of all men most miserable." But *they*—these sagacious, prudent men of this world—they have their reward. What have they ventured, given up, sacrificed, which is all lost for ever, if this world be all? What have they buried like seed in the ground, lost for ever, if there be no eternity?

Now, we do not say these men are absolutely wicked. We distinguish between their sowing to the flesh, and the sowing of those profligates last spoken of. All we

say is, there is "corruption" written on their harvest. It was for earth: and with earth it perishes. It may be the labour of the statesman, planning, like the Roman of old, the government and order of the kingdoms of the earth: or that of the astronomer, weighing suns, prescribing rules of return to comets, and dealing with things above earth in space, but unspiritual still: or that of the son of a humbler laboriousness, whose work is merely to provide for a family: or, lastly, the narrower range of the man of pleasure, whose chief care is where he shall spend the next season, in what metropolis, or which watering-place, or how best enjoy the next entertainment. Objects more or less harmless all. But they end. The pyramid crumbles into dust at last. The mighty empire of the eternal city breaks into fragments which disappear. The sowers for earth *have* their harvest here. Success in their schemes—quiet intellectual enjoyment—exemption from pain and loss—the fruits of worldly-wise sagacity. And that is all. "When the breath goeth forth, they return to their dust, and all their thoughts perish." The grave is not to them the gate of paradise, but simply the impressive mockery which the hand of death writes upon that body for which they lived, and with which all is gone. They reap corruption, for all they have toiled for decays!

Ye that lead the life of respectable worldliness! let these considerations arrest your indifference to the gospel. You have sown for earth—Well. And then—what? Hear the gospel. A Saviour whose Sacrifice is the world's life—whose death is the law of life: from

whose resurrection streams a Spirit which can change carnal into spiritual men—whose whole existence, reflecting God, was the utterance of the Divine truth and rule of heavenly life, the blessedness of giving—To live so, and to believe so, is to sow to the Spirit.

Lastly—*Sowing to the Spirit.* "He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

What is meant by sowing to the Spirit here is plain. "Let us not be weary in well-doing," says the apostle directly after: "for in due season we shall reap if we faint not." *Well-doing:* not faith: but works of goodness, were the sowing that he spoke of.

There is proclaimed here the rewardableness of works. So in many other passages: "Abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." "Laying up a good foundation for the time to come," was the reason alleged for charging rich men to be willing to give—and so all through. There is an irreversible principle. The amount of harvest is proportioned to the seed sown exactly. There are degrees of glory. The man who gives out of his abundance has one blessing, She who gives the mite, all she had, even all her living, has another, quite different. The rectitude of this principle, and what it is, will be plainer from the following considerations.

1. The harvest is Life Eternal. But Eternal Life here does not simply mean a life that lasts for ever. That is the destiny of the *Soul:* all souls, bad as well as good. But the bad do not enter into this "Eternal life." It is not simply the duration, but the quality of the life

which constitutes its character of Eternal. A spirit may live for ever, yet not enter into this. And a man may live but for five minutes the life of Divine benevolence, or desire for perfectness: in those five minutes he has entered into the life which is Eternal, never fluctuates, but is the same unalterably for ever, in the Life of God. *This* is the Reward.

2. The reward is not arbitrary, but natural. God's rewards and God's punishmments are all natural. Distinguish between arbitrary and natural. Death is an arbitrary punishment for forgery: it might be changed for transportation. It is not naturally connected. It depends upon the will of the law-maker. But trembling nerves are the direct and natural results of intemperance. They are in the order of nature the results of wrong-doing. The man reaps *what* he has sown. Similarly in rewards. If God gave riches in return for humbleness, that would be an arbitrary connection. He did give such a reward to Solomon. But when He gives Life Eternal, meaning by Life Eternal not duration of existence but heavenly quality of existence, as explained already, it is all natural. The seed sown in the ground contains in itself the future harvest. The harvest is but the development of the germ of life in the seed. A holy act strengthens the inward holiness. It is a seed of life growing into more life. "Whatsoever a man soweth, *that* shall he reap." He that sows much, thereby becomes more conformed to God than he was before —in heart and spirit. That is his reward and harvest. And just as among the apostles, there was one whose

spirit, attuned to love, made him emphatically the disciple whom Jesus loved, so shall there be some who, by previous discipline of the Holy Ghost, shall have more of His mind, and understand more of His love, and drink deeper of His joy than others—They that have sowed bountifully.

Every act done in Christ receives its exact and appropriate reward. They that are meek shall inherit the earth. They that are pure shall see God. They that suffer shall reign with Him. They that turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars for ever. They that receive a righteous man in the name of a righteous man—that is, because he is a righteous man—shall receive a righteous man's reward. Even the cup of cold water, given in the name of Christ, shall not lose its reward.

It will be therefore seen at once, Reward is not the result of merit. It is, in the order of grace, the natural consequence of well-doing. It is life becoming more life. It is the soul developing itself. It is the Holy Spirit of God in man, making itself more felt, and mingling more and more with his soul, felt more consciously with an ever-increasing heaven. You reap what you sow—not something else—but that. An act of love makes the soul more loving. A deed of humbleness deepens humbleness. The thing reaped is the very thing sown, multiplied a hundredfold. You have sown a seed of life—you reap Life everlasting.

XV.

Preached December 31, 1849.

THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST.

JOHN xvi. 31, 32.—"Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

THERE are two kinds of solitude: the first consisting of insulation in space; the other of isolation of the spirit. The first is simply separation by distance. When we are seen, touched, heard by none, we are said to be alone. And all hearts respond to the truth of that saying, This is not solitude: for sympathy can people our solitude with a crowd. The fisherman on the ocean alone at night is not alone when he remembers the earnest longings which are arising up to heaven at home for his safety—The traveller is not alone when the faces which will greet him on his arrival seem to beam upon him as he trudges on—The solitary student is not alone when he feels that human hearts will respond to the truths which he is preparing to address to them.

The other is loneliness of soul. There are times when hands touch ours, but only send an icy chill of unsympathising indifference to the heart: when eyes gaze into ours, but with a glazed look which cannot read into the bottom of our souls: when words pass from our lips, but only come back as an echo reverberated without reply through a dreary solitude: when the multitude throng and press us, and we cannot say, as Christ said, "Somebody hath *touched* me:" for the contact has been not between soul and soul, but only between form and form.

And there are two kinds of men who feel this last solitude in different ways. The first are the men of self-reliance: self-dependent: who ask no counsel, and crave no sympathy: who act and resolve alone—who can go sternly through duty, and scarcely shrink let what will be crushed in them. Such men command respect: for whoever respects himself, constrains the reverence of others. They are invaluable in all those professions of life in which sensitive feeling would be a superfluity; they make iron commanders: surgeons who do not shrink; and statesmen who do not flinch from their purpose for the dread of unpopularity. But mere self-dependence is weakness: and the conflict is terrible when a human sense of weakness is felt by such men. Jacob was alone when he slept in his way to Padan Aram, the first night that he was away from his father's roof, with the world before him, and all the old broken up: and Elijah was alone in the wilderness when the court had deserted him, and he said, "They have

digged down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword: and I, even I, only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." But the loneliness of the tender Jacob was very different from that of the stern Elijah. To Jacob the sympathy he yearned for was realized in the form of a simple dream. A ladder raised from earth to heaven figured the possibility of communion between the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. In Elijah's case, the storm, and the earthquake, and the fire, did their convulsing work in the soul, before a still, small voice told him that he was not alone. In such a spirit the sense of weakness comes with a burst of agony, and the dreadful conviction of being alone manifests itself with a rending of the heart of rock. It is only so that such souls can be taught that the Father is with them, and that they are not alone.

There is another class of men who live in sympathy. These are affectionate minds which tremble at the thought of being alone: not from want of courage, nor from weakness of intellect comes their dependence upon others, but from the intensity of their affections. It is the trembling spirit of humanity in them. They want not aid, nor even countenance: but only sympathy. And the trial comes to them not in the shape of fierce struggle, but of chill and utter loneliness, when they are called upon to perform a duty on which the world looks coldly, or to embrace a truth which has not found lodgment yet in the breasts of others.

It is to this latter and not to the former class that we must look if we would understand the spirit in which the

words of the text were pronounced. The deep Humanity of the Soul of Christ was gifted with those finer sensibilities of affectionate nature which stand in need of sympathy. He not only gave sympathy, but wanted it, too, from others. He who selected the gentle John to be his friend—who found solace in female sympathy, attended by the women who ministered to him out of their substance—who in the Trial hour could not bear even to pray without the human presence, which is the pledge and reminder of God's presence, had nothing in Him of the hard, merely self-dependent character. Even this verse testifies to the same fact. A stern spirit never could have said, "I am not alone: the Father is with Me"—never would have felt the loneliness which needed the balancing truth. These words tell of a struggle: an inward reasoning: a difficulty and a reply: a sense of solitude—"I shall be alone;" and an immediate correction of that; "not alone—the Father is with Me."

There is no thought connected with the Life of Christ more touching, none that seems so peculiarly to characterise His spirit, than the solitariness in which He lived. Those who understood Him best only understood Him half. Those who knew Him best scarcely could be said to *know* Him. On this occasion the disciples thought—Now we do understand—now we do believe. The lonely spirit answered, "*Do* ye now believe? Behold the hour cometh that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone."

Very impressive is that trait in His history. He was in this world alone.

I. First, then, we meditate on the Loneliness of Christ.
II. On the temper of His solitude.

1. The Loneliness of Christ was caused by the Divine elevation of His character. His infinite superiority severed Him from sympathy—His exquisite affectionateness made that want of sympathy a keen trial.

There is a second-rate greatness which the world can comprehend. If we take two who are brought into direct contrast by Christ Himself, the one the type of human, the other that of Divine excellence, the Son of Man and John the Baptist, this becomes clearly manifest. John's life had a certain rude, rugged goodness, on which was written, in characters which required no magnifying-glass to read, spiritual excellence. The world on the whole accepted him. Pharisees and Sadducees went to his baptism. The people idolized him as a prophet; and if he had not chanced to cross the path of a weak prince and a revengeful woman, we can see no reason why John might not have finished his course with joy, recognised as irreproachable. If we inquire why it was that the world accepted John and rejected Christ, one reply appears to be that the life of the one was finitely simple and one-sided, that of the Other divinely complex. In physical nature, the naturalist finds no difficulty in comprehending the simple structure of the lowest organizations of animal life,

where one uniform texture, and one organ performing the office of brain and heart and lungs, at once, leave little to perplex. But when he comes to study the complex anatomy of man, he has the labour of a lifetime before him. It is not difficult to master the constitution of a single country; but when you try to understand the universe, you find infinite appearances of contradiction: law opposed by law: motion balanced by motion: happiness blended with misery: and the power to elicit a divine order and unity out of this complex variety is given to only a few of the gifted of the race. That which the structure of man is to the structure of the limpet: that which the universe is to a single country, the complex and boundless soul of Christ was to the souls of other men. Therefore, to the superficial observer, His life was a mass of inconsistencies and contradictions. All thought themselves qualified to point out the discrepancies. The Pharisees could not comprehend how a holy Teacher could eat with publicans and sinners. His own brethren could not reconcile His assumption of a public office with the privacy which He aimed at keeping. "If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world." Some thought He was "a good man,"—others said, "Nay—but He deceiveth the people." And hence it was that He lived to see all that acceptance which had marked the earlier stage of His career, as for instance, at Capernaum, melt away. First, the Pharisees took the alarm: then the Sadducees: then the political party of the Herodians: then the People. That was the most terrible of all: for

the enmity of the upper classes is impotent; but when that cry of brute force is stirred from the deeps of society, as deaf to the voice of reason as the ocean in its strength churned into raving foam by the winds, the heart of mere earthly oak quails before that. The apostles, at all events, did quail. One denied: another betrayed: all deserted. They "were scattered, each to his own:" and the Truth Himself was left alone in Pilate's judgment-hall.

Now learn from this a very important distinction. To feel solitary is no uncommon thing. To complain of being alone, without sympathy and misunderstood, is general enough. In every place, in many a family, these victims of diseased sensibility are to be found, and they might find a weakening satisfaction in observing a parallel between their own feelings and those of Jesus. But before that parallel is assumed, be very sure that it is, as in His case, the elevation of your character which severs you from your species. The world has small sympathy for Divine goodness: but it also has little for a great many other qualities which are disagreeable to it. You meet with no response—you are passed by—find yourself unpopular—meet with little communion.—Well? Is that because you are *above* the world, nobler, devising and executing grand plans which they cannot comprehend: vindicating the wronged, proclaiming and living on great principles: offending it by the saintliness of your purity, and the unworldliness of your aspirations? Then yours is the loneliness of Christ. Or is it that you are wrapped up in self—cold, disobliging,

sentimental, indifferent about the welfare of others, and very much astonished that they are not deeply interested in you? *You* must not use these words of Christ. They have nothing to do with you.

Let us look at one or two of the occasions on which this loneliness was felt.

The first time was when He was but twelve years old, when His parents found Him in the temple, hearing the doctors and asking them questions. High thoughts were in the Child's soul: expanding views of life: larger views of duty and His own destiny.

There is a moment in every true life—to some it comes very early—when the old routine of duty is not large enough—when the parental roof seems too low, because the Infinite above is arching over the soul—when the old formulas, in creeds, catechisms, and articles, seem to be narrow, and they must either be thrown aside, or else transformed into living and breathing realities—when the earthly father's authority is being superseded by the claims of a Father in heaven.

That is a lonely, lonely moment, when the young soul first feels God—when this earth is recognised as an "awful place, yea, the very gate of heaven." When the dream-ladder is seen planted against the skies, and we wake, and the dream haunts us as a sublime reality.

You may detect the approach of that moment in the young man or the young woman by the awakened spirit of inquiry: by a certain restlessness of look, and an eager earnestness of tone: by the devouring study of all kinds of books: by the waning of your own

influence, while the inquirer is asking the truth of the Doctors and Teachers in the vast Temple of the world: by a certain opinionativeness, which is austere and disagreeable enough: but the austerest moment of the fruit's taste is that in which it is passing from greenness into ripeness. If you wait in patience, the sour will become sweet. Rightly looked at, that opinionativeness is more truly anguish: the fearful solitude of feeling the insecurity of all that is human; the discovery that life is real, and forms of social and religious existence hollow. The old moorings are torn away, and the soul is drifting, drifting, drifting, very often without compass, except the guidance of an unseen hand, into the vast infinite of God. Then come the lonely words, and no wonder, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

2. That solitude was felt by Christ in trial. In the desert: in Pilate's judgment-hall: in the garden, He was alone—and alone must every son of man meet his trial-hour. The individuality of the soul necessitates that. Each man is a new soul in this world: untried, with a boundless Possible before him. No one can predict what he may become, prescribe his duties, or mark out his obligations. Each man's own nature has its own peculiar rules: and he must take up his life-plan alone, and persevere in it in a perfect privacy with which no stranger intermeddleth. Each man's temptations are made up of a host of peculiarities, internal and external, which no other mind can measure. You are tried alone —alone you pass into the desert—alone you must bear

and conquer in the Agony—alone you must be sifted by the world. There are moments known only to a man's own self, when he sits by the poisoned springs of existence, "yearning for a morrow which shall free him from the strife." And there are trials more terrible than that. Not when vicious inclinations are opposed to holy, but when virtue conflicts with virtue, is the real rending of the soul in twain. A temptation, in which the lower nature struggles for mastery, can be met by the whole united force of the spirit. But it is when obedience to a heavenly Father can be only paid by disobedience to an earthly one: or fidelity to duty can be only kept by infidelity to some entangling engagement: or the straight path must be taken over the misery of others: or the counsel of the affectionate friend must be met with a "Get thee behind me, Satan," —Oh! it is then, when human advice is unavailable, that the soul feels what it is to be alone.

Once more—the Redeemer's soul was alone in dying. The hour had come—they were all gone, and He was, as He predicted, left alone. All that is human drops from us in that hour. Human faces flit and fade, and the sounds of the world become confused. "I shall die alone"—yes, and alone you live. The philosopher tells us that no atom in creation touches another atom —they only approach within a certain distance; then the attraction ceases, and an invisible something repels —they only *seem* to touch. No soul touches another soul except at one or two points; and those chiefly external,—a fearful and a lonely thought; but one of

the truest of life. Death only realizes that which has been fact all along. In the central deeps of our being we are alone.

II. The spirit or temper of that solitude.

1. Observe its grandeur. I am alone, yet not alone. There is a feeble and sentimental way in which we speak of the Man of sorrows. We turn to the cross, and the agony, and the loneliness, to touch the softer feelings; to arouse compassion. You degrade *that* loneliness by your compassion. Compassion! compassion for Him! Adore if you will—respect and reverence that sublime solitariness with which none but the Father was—but no pity: let it draw out the firmer and manlier graces of the soul. Even tender sympathy seems out of place.

For even in human things, the strength that is in a man can be only learnt when he is thrown upon his own resources and left alone. What a man can do in conjunction with others does not test the man. Tell us what he can do alone. It is one thing to defend the truth when you know that your audience are already prepossessed, and that every argument will meet a willing response: and it is another thing to hold the truth when truth must be supported, if at all, alone—met by cold looks and unsympathising suspicion. It is one thing to rush on to danger with the shouts and the sympathy of numbers: it is another thing when the lonely chieftain of the sinking ship sees the last boatful disengage itself, and folds his arms to go down into the majesty of darkness, crushed, but not subdued.

Such and greater far was the strength and majesty of the Saviour's solitariness. It was not the trial of the lonely hermit. There is a certain gentle and pleasing melancholy in the life which is lived alone. But there are the forms of nature to speak to him, and he has not the positive opposition of mankind if he has the absence of actual sympathy. It is a solemn thing, doubtless, to be apart from men, and to feel eternity rushing by like an arrowy river. But the solitude of Christ was the solitude of a crowd. In that single Human bosom dwelt the Thought which was to be the germ of the world's life: a thought unshared, misunderstood, or rejected. Can you not feel the grandeur of those words, when the Man, reposing on His solitary strength, felt the last shadow of perfect isolation pass across His soul: "My God, my God, why hast *Thou* forsaken me?"

Next, learn from these words self-reliance. "Ye shall leave me alone." Alone then the Son of man was content to be. He threw Himself on his own solitary thought: did not go down to meet the world; but waited, though it might be for ages, till the world should come round to Him. He appealed to the Future did not aim at seeming consistent: left His contradictions unexplained: I came from the Father I leave the world, and go to the Father. "Now," said they, "thou speakest no proverb:" that is, enigma. But many a hard and enigmatical saying before He had spoken, and He left them all. A thread runs through all true acts, stringing them together into one harmonious chain: but

it is not for the Son of God to be anxious to prove their consistency with each other.

This is self-reliance—to repose calmly on the thought which is deepest in our bosoms, and be unmoved if the world will not accept it yet. To live on your own convictions against the world, is to overcome the world —to believe that what is truest in you is true for all: to abide by that, and not be over-anxious to be heard or understood, or sympathised with, certain that at last all must acknowledge the same, and that while you stand firm, the world will come round to you: that is independence. It is not difficult to get away into retirement, and there live upon your own convictions: nor is it difficult to mix with men, and follow their convictions: but to enter into the world, and there live out firmly and fearlessly according to your own conscience, that is Christian greatness.

There is a cowardice in this age which is not Christian. We shrink from the consequences of truth. We look round and cling dependently. We ask what men will think; what others will say—whether they will not stare in astonishment. Perhaps they will; but he who is calculating that, will accomplish nothing in this life. The Father—the Father which is with us and in us—what does He think? God's work cannot be done without a spirit of independence. A man is got some way in the Christian life when he has learned to say humbly and yet majestically, "I dare to be alone."

Lastly,—remark the humility of this loneliness. Had the Son of man simply said, I can be alone, He would

have said no more than any proud, self-relying man can say. But when He added, "because the Father is with me," that independence assumed another character, and self-reliance became only another form of reliance upon God. Distinguish between genuine and spurious humility. There is a false humility which says, "It is my own poor thought, and I must not trust it. I must distrust my own reason and judgment, because they are my own. I must not accept the dictates of my own conscience, for is it not my own, and is not trust in self the great fault of our fallen nature?"

Very well. Now, remember something else. There is a Spirit which beareth witness with our spirits—there is a God who "is not far from any one of us"—there is a "Light which lighteth every man which cometh into the world." Do not be unnaturally humble. The thought of your mind perchance is the Thought of God. To refuse to follow that may be to disown God. To take the judgment and conscience of other men to live by, where is the humility of that? From whence did their conscience and judgment come? Was the fountain from which they drew exhausted for you? If they refused like you to rely on their own conscience, and you rely upon it, how are you sure that it is more the Mind of God than your own which you have refused to hear?

Look at it in another way. The charm of the words of great men, those grand sayings which are recognised as true as soon as heard, is this, that you recognise them as wisdom which has passed across your own mind. You

feel that they are your own thoughts come back to you, else you would not at once admit them: "All that floated across me before, only I could not say it, and did not feel confident enough to assert it: or had not conviction enough to put it into words." Yes; God spoke to you what He did to them: only they believed it, said it, trusted the Word within them, and you did not. Be sure that often when you say, "it is only my own poor thought, and I am alone,"—the real correcting thought is this, "alone, but the Father is with me,"—therefore I can live that lonely conviction.

There is no danger in this, whatever timid minds may think—no danger of mistake, if the character be a true one. For we are not left in uncertainty in this matter. It is given to us to know our base from our noble hours: to distinguish between the voice which is from above, and that which speaks from below, out of the abyss of our animal and selfish nature. Samuel could distinguish between the impulse, quite a human one, which would have made him select Eliab out of Jesse's sons, and the deeper judgment by which "the *Lord* said, Look not on his countenance, nor on the height of his stature, for I have refused him." Doubtless deep truth of character is required for this: for the whispering voices get mixed together, and we dare not abide by our own thoughts, because we think them our own, and not God's: and this because we only now and then endeavour to know in earnest. It is only given to the habitually true to know the difference. He knew it, because all His blessed life long He could say, "My

judgment is just, *because* I seek not my own will, but the will of Him which sent me."

The practical result and inference of all this is a very simple but a very deep one: the deepest of existence. Let life be a life of faith. Do not go timorously about, inquiring what others think, what others believe, and what others say. It seems the easiest, it is the most difficult, thing in life to do this—believe in God. God is near you. Throw yourself fearlessly upon Him. Trembling mortal, there is an unknown might within your soul which will wake when you command it. The day may come when all that is human, man and woman, will fall off from you, as they did from Him. Let His strength be yours. Be independent of them all now. The Father is with you. Look to Him, and He will save you.

XVI.

Preached October 20, 1850.

THE NEW COMMANDMENT OF LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER.

JOHN xiii. 34.—"A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

THESE words derive impressiveness from having been spoken immediately before the last Supper, and on the eve of the great Sacrifice: the commandment of Love issued appropriately at the time of the Feast of Love, and not long before the great Act of Love. For the love of Christ was no fine *saying:* it cost Him His life to say these words with meaning, "As I have loved you."

There is a difficulty in the attempt to grasp the meaning of this command, arising from the fact that words change their meaning. Our Lord affixed a new significance to the word Love: it had been in use, of course, before, but the new sense in which He used it made it a new word.

His law is not adequately represented by the word Love: because love is, by conventional usage, appropriated to one species of human affection, which, in the commoner men, is the most selfish of all our feelings:

in the best, too exclusive and individual to represent that Charity which is universal.

Nor is Charity a perfect symbol of His meaning: for charity by use is identified with another form of love which is but a portion of it, almsgiving: and too saturated with that meaning to be entirely disengaged from it, even when we use it most accurately.

Benevolence or Philanthropy, in derivation, come nearer to the idea: but yet you feel at once that these words fall short: they are too tame and cool; too merely passive, as states of feeling rather than forms of life.

We have no sufficient word. There is therefore no help for it, but patiently to strive to master the meaning of this mighty word Love, in the only light that is left us, the light of the Saviour's life: "As I have loved you:" that alone expounds it.

We will dispossess our minds of all preconceived notions; remove all low associations, all partial and conventional ones. If we would understand this law, it must be ever a "new" commandment, ever receiving fresh light and meaning from His life.

Take, I. The novelty of the law—"That ye love one another."

II. The Spirit or measure of it—"As I have loved you."

I. Its novelty. A "new commandment:" yet that law was old. See 1 John ii. 7, 8.

1. It was new as a historical fact. We talk of the

apostolic mission as a matter of course; we say that the apostles were ordered to go and plant churches, and so we dismiss the great fact, But we forget that the command was rather the result of a spirit working from within, than of an injunction working from without. That spirit was Love.

And when that new spirit was in the world, see how straightway it created a new thing. Men before that had travelled into foreign countries: the naturalist to collect specimens: the historian to accumulate facts: the philosopher to hive up wisdom, or else he had stayed in his cell or grove to paint *pictures* of beautiful love. But the spectacle of an Apostle Paul crossing oceans not to conquer kingdoms, not to hive up knowledge, but to impart life: not to accumulate stores for self, but to give, and to spend himself—was new in the history of the world. The celestial fire had touched the hearts of men, and their hearts flamed: and it caught, and spread, and would not stop. On they went, that glorious band of brothers, in their strange enterprise, over oceans, and through forests, penetrating into the dungeon, and to the throne—to the hut of the savage feeding on human flesh, and to the shore lined with the skin-clad inhabitants of these far Isles of Britain. Read the account given by Tertullian of the marvellous rapidity with which the Christians increased and swarmed, and you are reminded of one of those vast armies of ants which move across a country in irresistible myriads, drowned by thousands in rivers, cut off by fire, consumed by man and beast, and yet fresh hordes succeeding interminably to supply their place.

A new voice was heard: a new yearning upon earth; man pining at being severed from his brother, and longing to burst the false distinctions which had kept the best hearts from each other so long—an infant cry of life—the cry of the young Church of God. And all this from Judea—the narrowest, most bigoted, most intolerant nation on the face of the earth.

Now I say that this was historically a new thing.

2. It was new in extent. It was, in literal words, an old Commandment given before both to Jew and Gentile. To the Jew, as, for instance, in Lev. xix. 18. To the Gentile, in the recognition which was so often made of the beauty of the law in its partial application, as in the case of friendship, patriotism, domestic attachment, and so on.

But the difference lay in the extent in which these words "one another" were understood. By them, or rather by "neighbour," the Jew meant his countrymen; and narrowed that down again to his friends among his countrymen—so that the well-known Rabbinical gloss upon these words, current in the days of Christ, was, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy." And what the Gentile understood by the extent of the law of love, we may learn from the well-known words of their best and wisest, who thanked heaven that he was born a man, and not a brute—a Greek, and not a barbarian: as if to be a barbarian were identical with being a brute.

Now, listen to Christ's exposition of the word neighbour. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love

thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies." And he went further,—As a specimen of a neighbour he specially selected one of that nation whom, as a theologian and a patriot, every Jew had been taught to hate. And just as the application of electricity to the innumerable wants of human life and to new ends, is reckoned a new discovery and invention of modern times (though the fact has been familiar for ages to the Indian child in the forest of the far west, and applied by him for ages to his childish sports), so the extension of this grand principle of Love to all the possible cases of life, and to all possible persons—even though the principle was known and applied long before, in love to friends, country, and relations—is truly and properly a new commandment, a discovery, a gospel, a revelation.

3. It was new in being made the central principle of a system. Never had obedience before been trusted to a principle: it had always been hedged round by a law. The religion of Christ is not a law, but a spirit—not a creed, but a life. To the one motive of Love, God has entrusted the whole work of winning the souls of His redeemed. The heart of man was made for love: pants and pines for it:—only in the love of Christ, and not in restrictions, can his soul expand. Now it was reserved for One to pierce, with the glance of intuition, down into the springs of human action, and to proclaim the simplicity of its machinery. "Love," said the apostle after him—"Love is the fulfilling of the law."

We are told that in the new commandment the old

perishes: that under the law of love, man is free from the law of works. Let us see how.

Take any commandment—for example the sixth, the seventh, the eighth. I may abstain from murder and theft, deterred by law: because law has annexed to them certain penalties. But I may also rise into the spirit of Charity: then I am free from the law: the law was not made for a righteous man; the law no more binds or restrains me, now that I love my neighbour, than the dyke built to keep in the sea at high tide restrains it when that sea has sunk to low watermark.

Or the seventh. You may keep that law from dread of discovery—or you may learn a higher Love: and then you *cannot* injure a human soul: you cannot degrade a human spirit. Charity has made the old commandment superfluous. In the strong language of St. John, you *cannot* sin because you are born of God.

It was the proclamation of this, the great living principle of human obedience, not with the pedantry of a philosopher, nor the exaggeration of an orator, but in the simple reality of life, which made this commandment of Christ a new commandment.

II. The spirit or measure of the law,—"*as* I have loved you."

Broadly, the love of Christ was the spirit of giving all He had to give. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Christ's love was not a sentiment; it was a self-giving. To that His adversaries bore testimony:—"He saved others;

himself He cannot save." Often as we have read these words, did it ever strike us, and if not, does it not bring a flash of surprise when we perceive it, that these words, meant as taunt, were really the noblest panegyric, a testimony higher and more adequate far than even that of the centurion? "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The first clause contained the answer to the second—"Himself He cannot save!" How *could* He, having saved others? How can any keep what he gives? How can any live for self, when he is living for others? Unconsciously, those enemies were enunciating the very principle of Christianity, the grand law of all existence, that only by losing self you can save others; that only by giving life you can bless. Love gives itself. The mother spends herself in giving life to her child; the soldier dies for his country; nay, even the artist produces nothing destined for immortality, nothing that will *live*, except so far as he has forgotten himself, and merged his very being in his work.

"He saved others; Himself He cannot save." That was the love of Christ. Now to descend to particulars.

That spirit of self-giving manifests itself in the shape of considerate kindliness. Take three cases:—First, that in which He fed the people with bread. "I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat." There was a tenderness which, not absorbed in His own great designs, considered a number of small particulars of their state, imagined, provided; and this for the satisfaction of the lowest wants. Again, to the disciples: "Come

ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile." He would not overwork them in the sublimest service. He did not grudge from duty their interval of relaxation; He even tenderly enforced it. Lastly, His dying words: "Behold thy mother! Woman, behold thy son!" Short sentences. He was too exhausted to say more. But in that hour of death-torture, He could think of her desolate state when He was gone, and with delicate, thoughtful attention provide for her well-being.

There are people who would do great acts; but because they wait for great opportunities, life passes, and the acts of love are not done at all. Observe, this considerateness of Christ was shown in little things. And such are the parts of human life. Opportunities for doing *greatly* seldom occur—life is made up of infinitesimals. If you compute the sum of happiness in any given day, you will find that it was composed of small attentions, kind looks, which made the heart swell, and stirred into health that sour, rancid film of misanthropy which is apt to coagulate on the stream of our inward life, as surely as we live in heart apart from our fellow-creatures. Doubtless, the memory of each one of us will furnish him with the picture of some member of a family whose very presence seemed to shed happiness: A daughter, perhaps, whose light step even in the distance irradiated every one's countenance. What was the secret of such an one's power? what had she done? Absolutely nothing; but radiant smiles, beaming good humour, the tact of divining what every one felt, and every one wanted, told that she had got out of self and

learned to think for others; so that at one time it showed itself in deprecating the quarrel, which lowering brows and raised tones already showed to be impending, by sweet words; at another, by smoothing an invalid's pillow; at another, by soothing a sobbing child; at another, by humouring and softening a father who had returned weary and ill-tempered from the irritating cares of business. None but she saw those things. None but a loving heart *could* see them.

That was the secret of her heavenly power. Call you those things homely trifles, too homely for a sermon? By reference to the character of Christ, they rise into something quite sublime. For *that* is loving as He loved. And remark, too, these trifles prepared for larger deeds. The one who will be found in trial capable of great acts of love, is ever the one who is always doing considerate small ones. The Soul which poured itself out to death upon the cross for the human race, was the Spirit of Him who thought of the wants of the people, contrived for the rest of the disciples, and was thoughtful for a mother.

Once again,—It was a love never foiled by the unworthiness of those on whom it had been once bestowed. It was a love which faults, desertion, denial, unfaithfulness, could not chill, even though they wrung His heart. He had chosen: and He trusted. Even in ordinary manhood, that is a finely-tempered heart, one of no ordinary mould, which can say, "It ever was my way, and shall be still, when I do trust a man to trust him wholly." And yet there was everything to shake

His trust in humanity. The Pharisees called Him Good Master, and were circumventing Him all the while. The people shouted hosannas, and three days afterwards were shrieking for His blood. One disciple who had dipped in the same dish, and been trusted with His inmost counsels, betrayed and deceived Him; another was ashamed of Him; three fell asleep while He was preparing for death; all forsook Him. Yet nothing is more surprising than that unshaken, I had well-nigh said, *obstinate*, trust with which He clung to His hopes of our nature, and believed in the face of demonstration.

As we mix in life, there comes, especially to sensitive natures, a temptation to distrust. In young life, we throw ourselves with unbounded and glorious confidence on such as we think well of—an error soon corrected: for we soon find out—too soon—that men and women are not what they seem. Then comes disappointment; and the danger is a reaction of desolating and universal mistrust. For if we look on the doings of man with a merely worldly eye, and pierce below the surface of character, we are apt to feel bitter scorn and disgust for our fellow-creatures. We have lived to see human hollowness: the ashes of the Dead Sea shore; the falseness of what seemed so fair; the mouldering beneath the whited sepulchre: and no wonder if we are tempted to think "friendship *all* a cheat—smiles hypocrisy—words deceit;" and they who are what is called *knowing* in life contract by degrees, as the result of their experience, a hollow distrust of men, and learn to sneer at apparently good motives. That demoniacal sneer

which we have seen, ay perhaps felt, curling the lip at times, "Doth Job serve God for nought?"

The only preservation from this withering of the heart is Love. Love is its own perennial fount of strength. The strength of affection is a proof not of the worthiness of the object, but of the largeness of the soul which loves. Love descends, not ascends. The might of a river depends not on the quality of the soil through which it passes, but on the inexhaustibleness and depth of the spring from which it proceeds. The greater mind cleaves to the smaller with more force than the other to it. A parent loves the child more than the child the parent; and partly because the parent's heart is larger, not because the child is worthier. The Saviour loved His disciples infinitely more than His disciples loved Him, because His heart was infinitely larger. Love trusts on —ever hopes and expects better things, and this, a trust springing from itself and out of its own deeps alone.

And more than this. It is this *trusting* love that makes men what they are trusted to be, so realizing itself. Would you make men *trustworthy?* Trust them. Would you make them true? Believe them. This was the real force of that sublime battle-cry which no Englishman hears without emotion. When the crews of the fleet of Britain knew that they were *expected* to do their duty, they *did* their duty. They felt in that spirit-stirring sentence that they were trusted: and the simultaneous cheer that rose from every ship was a forerunner of victory—the battle was half-won already. They went to serve a country which expected from them

great things: and they *did* great things. Those pregnant words raised an enthusiasm for the chieftain who had thrown himself upon his men in trust, which a double line of hostile ships could not appal, nor decks drenched in blood extinguish.

And it is on this principle that Christ wins the hearts of His redeemed. He trusted the doubting Thomas; and Thomas arose with a faith worthy "of his Lord and his God." He would not suffer even the lie of Peter to shake His conviction that Peter might love Him yet; and Peter answered nobly to that sublime forgiveness. His last prayer was in extenuation and hope for the race who had rejected Him—and the kingdoms of the world are become His own. He has loved us, God knows why—I do not—and we, all unworthy though we be, respond faintly to that love, and try to be what He would have us.

Therefore, come what may, hold fast to love. Though men should rend your heart, let them not embitter or harden it. We win by tenderness: we conquer by forgiveness. Oh, strive to enter into something of that large celestial Charity which is meek, enduring, unretaliating, and which even the overbearing world cannot withstand for ever. Learn the new commandment of the Son of God. Not to love merely, but to love *as He loved.* Go forth in this spirit to your life-duties: go forth, children of the Cross, to carry everything before you, and win victories for God by the conquering power of a love like His.

XVII.

Preached June 15, 1851.

THE MESSAGE OF THE CHURCH TO MEN OF WEALTH.*

1 Sam. xxv. 10, 11.—"And Nabal answered David's servants, and said, Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now-a-days that break away every man from his master. Shall I, then, take my bread and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be."

I have selected this passage for our subject this evening, because it is one of the earliest cases recorded in the Bible in which the interests of the employer and the employed, the man of wealth and the man of work, stood, or seemed to stand, in antagonism to each other.

It was a period in which an old system of things was breaking up; and the new one was not yet established. The patriarchal relationship of tutelage and dependence was gone, and monarchy was not yet in firm existence.

* This subject was continued on the following Sunday. By accident, the continuation was omitted from the first edition of Vol. I., and inserted at the beginning of Vol. II. It has been thought better to continue that arrangement, merely drawing attention to the fact, that the conclusion of the subject is to be sought in Vol. II.

Saul was on the throne; but his rule was irregular and disputed. Many things were slowly growing up into custom which had not yet the force of law; and the first steps by which custom passes into law from precedent to precedent are often steps at every one of which struggle and resistance must take place.

The history of the chapter is briefly this. Nabal, the wealthy sheep-master, fed his flocks in the pastures of Carmel. David was leader of a band of men who got their living by the sword on the same hills: outlaws whose excesses he in some degree restrained, and over whom he retained a leader's influence. A rude irregular honour was not unknown among those fierce men. They honourably abstained from injuring Nabal's flocks. They did more: they protected them from all harm against the marauders of the neighbourhood. By the confession of Nabal's own herdsmen, "they were a wall unto them both by night and day, all the time they were with them keeping their flocks."

And thus a kind of Right grew up: irregular enough, but sufficient to establish a claim on Nabal for remuneration of these services: a new claim, not admitted by him: reckoned by him an exaction, which could be enforced by no law; only by that law which is above all statute-law, deciding according to emergencies; an indefinable instinctive sense of Fairness and Justice. But as there was no law, and each man was to himself a law, and the sole arbiter of his own rights, what help was there but that disputes should rise between the wealthy proprietors and their self-

constituted champions, with exaction and tyranny on the one side, churlishness and parsimony on the other? Hence a fruitful and ever-fresh source of struggle: the one class struggling to take as much, and the other to give as little as possible. In modern language, the Rights of Labour were in conflict with the Rights of Property.

The story proceeds thus:—David presented a demand, moderate and courteous enough (v. 6, 7, 8). It was refused by Nabal, and added to the refusal were those insulting taunts of low birth and outcast condition which are worse than injury, and sting, making men's blood run fire. One court of appeal was left. There remained nothing but the trial by Force. "Gird ye on," said David, "every man his sword."

Now, observe the fearful, hopeless character of this struggle. The question had come to this: whether David with his ferocious, needy six hundred mountaineers united by the sense of wrong, or Nabal with his well-fed and trained hirelings bound by interest not love to his cause, were stronger? Which was the more powerful, want whetted by insult, or selfishness pampered by abundance; they who wished to keep by force, or they who wished to take? An awful and uncertain spectacle, but the spectacle which is exhibited in every country where Rights are keenly felt and Duties lightly —where insolent demand is met by insulting defiance. Wherever classes are held apart by rivalry and selfishness instead of drawn together by the Law of Love—wherever there has not been established a kingdom of

heaven, but only a kingdom of the world—there exist the forces of inevitable collision.

I. The causes of this false social state.
II. The message of the Church to the man of wealth.

I. False basis on which social superiority was held to rest.

Throughout, Nabal's conduct was built upon the assumption of his own superiority. He was a man of wealth. David was dependent on his own daily efforts. Was not that enough to settle the question of superiority and inferiority? It was enough on both sides for a long time, till the falsehood of the asssumption became palpable and intolerable. But palpable and intolerable it did become at last.

A social falsehood will be borne long, even with considerable inconvenience, until it forces itself obtrusively on men's attention, and can be endured no longer. The exact point at which *this* social falsehood, that wealth constitutes superiority and has a right to the subordination of inferiors, becomes intolerable, varies according to several circumstances.

The evils of poverty are comparative—they depend on climate. In warm climates, where little food, no fuel, and scanty shelter are required, the sting is scarcely felt till poverty becomes starvation. They depend on contrast. Far above the point where poverty becomes actual famine, it may become unbearable if contrasted strongly with the unnecessary luxury and abundance

enjoyed by the classes above. Where all suffer equally, as men and officers suffer in an Arctic voyage, men bear hardship with cheerfulness: but where the suffering weighs heavily on some, and the luxury of enjoyment is out of all proportion monopolised by a few, the point of reaction is reached long before penury has become actual want: or, again, when wealth or rank assumes an insulting domineering character—when contemptuous names for the poor are invented, and current among the more unfeeling of a wealthy class: then the falsehood of superiority can be tolerated no longer; for we do not envy honours which are meekly borne, nor wealth which is unostentatious.

Now it was this which brought matters to a crisis. David had borne poverty long—nay, he and his men had long endured the contrast between their own cavern-homes and beds upon the rock, and Nabal's comforts. But when Nabal added to this those pungent biting sneers, which sink into poor men's hearts and rankle; which are not forgotten, but come out fresh in the day of retribution,—"Who is David? and who is the son of Jesse? There be many servants now a days that break away every man from his master," then David began to measure himself with Nabal;—Not a wiser man—nor a better—nor even a stronger, Who is this Nabal? Intellectually, a fool—morally, a profligate, drowning reason in excess of wine at the annual sheep-shearing. A tyrant over his slaves—over-bearing to men who only ask of him their rights. Then rose the question, which Nabal had better not have forced men

to answer for themselves. By what right does this possessor of wealth lord it over men who are inferior in no one particular?

Now observe two things.

1. An apparent inconsistency in David's conduct. David had received injury after injury from Saul, and had only forgiven. One injury from Nabal, and David is striding over the hills to revenge his wrong with naked steel. How came this reverence and irreverence to mix together.

We reply. Saul had a claim of Authority on David's allegiance: Nabal only one of rank. Between these the Bible makes a vast difference. It says, The *powers* which be are ordained of God. But *upper* and *lower*, as belonging to difference in property, are fictitious terms: true, if character corresponds with titular superiority; false, if it does not. And such was the difference manifested in the life of the Son of God. To lawful authority, whether Roman or Jewish, even priestly, He paid deference: but to the titled mark of conventional distinction, none. Rabbi, Rabbi, was no Divine authority. It was not power, a delegated attribute of God: it was only a name. In Saul, therefore, David reverenced one his superior in authority; but in Nabal he only had one surpassing him in wealth. And David refused, somewhat too rudely, to acknowledge the bad, great man as his superior: would pay him no reverence, respect, or allegiance whatever. Let us mark that distinction well, so often confused—kings, masters, parents: here is a power ordained of God. Honour it. But wealth,

name, title, distinctions, always fictitious, often false and vicious, if you claim homage for these, separate from worth, you confound two things essentially different. Try that by the test of His Life. Name the text where Christ claimed reverence for wealth or rank. On the Mount did the Son of Man bow the knee to the majesty of wealth and wrong, or was His Sonship shown in that He would not bow down to that as if of God?

2. This great falsehood, respecting superior and inferior, rested on a truth. There had been a superiority in the wealthy class once. In the patriarchal system wealth and rule had gone together. The father of the family and tribe was the one in whom proprietorship was centred. But the patriarchal system had passed away. Men like Nabal succeeded to the patriarch's wealth, and expected the subordination which had been yielded to patriarchal character and position: and this when every particular of relationship was altered. Once the patriarch was the protector of his dependants. Now David's class was independent, and the protectors rather than the protected: at all events able to defend themselves. Once the rich man was ruler in virtue of paternal relationship. Now wealth was severed from rule and relationship: a man might be rich, yet neither a ruler, nor a protector, nor a kinsman. And the fallacy of Nabal's expectation consisted in this, that he demanded for wealth that reverence which had once been due to men who happened to be wealthy.

It is a fallacy in which we are perpetually entangled. We expect reverence for that which was once a symbol

of what was reverenced, but is reverenced no longer. Here, in England, it is common to complain that there is no longer any respect of inferiors towards superiors: that servants were once devoted and grateful, tenants submissive, subjects enthusiastically loyal. But we forget that servants were once protected by their masters: and tenants safe from wrong only through the guardianship of their powerful lords: that thence a personal gratitude grew up: that now they are protected by the law from wrong by a different social system altogether: and that the individual bond of gratitude subsists no longer. We expect that to masters and employers the same reverence and devotedness shall be rendered which were due to them under other circumstances, and for different reasons: as if wealth and rank had ever been the claim to reverence, and not merely the accidents and accompaniments of the claim: as if anything less sacred than holy ties could purchase sacred feelings: as if the homage of free manhood could be due to gold and name: as if to the mere Nabal-fool who is labelled as worth so much, and whose signature carries with it so much coin, the holiest and most ennobling sensations of the soul, reverence and loyalty, were due by God's appointment.

No. That patriarchal system has passed for ever. No sentimental wailings for the past, no fond regrets for the virtues of a bygone age, no melancholy, poetical, retrospective antiquarianism can restore it. In church and state the past *is* past: and you can no more bring back the blind reverence than the rude virtues of those

days. The day has come in which if feudal loyalty or patriarchal reverence are to be commanded, they must be won by patriarchal virtues or feudal real superiorities.

II. Cause of this unhealthy social state: A false conception respecting Rights.

It would be unjust to Nabal to represent this as an act of wilful oppression and conscious injustice. He did what appeared to him fair between man and man. He paid his labourers. Why should he pay anything beyond stipulated wages?

David's demand appeared an extravagant and insolent one, provoking unfeigned astonishment and indignation. It was an invasion of his rights. It was a dictation with respect to the employment of that which was his own. "Shall I take my bread, and my water, and my flesh that I have killed for my shearers, and give it unto men whom I know not whence they be?"

Recollect, too, there was something to be said for Nabal. This view of the irresponsible right of property was not *his* invention. It was the view probably entertained by all his class. It had descended to him from his parents. They were prescriptive and admitted rights on which he stood. And however false or unjust a prescriptive right may be, however baseless when examined, there is much excuse for those who have inherited and not invented it; for it is hard to see through the falsehood of any system by which we profit, and which is upheld by general consent, especially when

good men, too, uphold it. Rare, indeed, is that pure-heartedness which sees with eagle glance through conventionalisms—This is a wrong, and I and my own class are the doers of it.

On the other hand, David and his needy followers were not slow to perceive that they had their rights over that property of Nabal's.

Men on whom wrongs press are the first to feel them, and their cries of pain and indignation are the appointed means of God to direct to their wrongs the attention of society. Very often the fierce and maddened shriek of suffering is the first intimation that a wrong exists at all.

There was no law in Israel to establish David's claims. This guardianship of Nabal's flocks was partly a self-constituted thing. No bargain had been made: no sum of reward expressly stipulated. But there is a Law besides, and above all written law, which gives to written laws their authority, and from which, so often as they diverge, it is woe to the framers of the law; for their law must perish, and the Eternal Law unseen will get itself acknowledged as a truth from heaven, or a truth from hell—a truth begirt with fire and sword, if they will not read it except so.

In point of fact, David had a right to a share of Nabal's profits. The harvest was in part David's harvest, for without David it never could have been reaped. The sheep were in part David's sheep, for without David not a sheep would have been spared by the marauders of the hills. Not a sheaf of corn was carried to Nabal's barn: nor a night passed in repose by Nabal's shepherds,

but what told of the share of David in the saving of that sheaf, and the procurement of that repose (not the less real because it was past and unseen). The right which the soldier has by law to his pay, was the right which David had by unwritten law; a right resting on the fact that his services were indispensable for the harvest.

Here, then, is one of the earliest instances of the Rights o Labour coming into collision with the Rights of Property: rights shadowy, undefined, perpetually shifting their boundaries, varying with every case, altering with every age, incapable of being adjusted except rudely by law, and leaving always something which the most subtle and elaborate law cannot define, and which in any moment may grow up into a wrong.

Now, when it comes to this, Rights against Rights, there is no determination of the question but by overwhelming numbers or blood. David's remedy was a short, sharp, decisive one. "Gird ye on every man his sword." And it is difficult, for the sake of humanity, to say to which side in such a quarrel we should wish well. If the rich man succeds in civil war, he will bind the chain of degradation more severely and more surely for years, or ages, on the crushed serf. If the champions of popular rights succeed by the sword, you may then await, in awe, the reign of tyranny, licentiousness, and lawlessness. For the victory of the lawless, with the memory of past wrongs to avenge, is almost more sanguinary than the victory of those who have had power long, and whose power has been defied.

3. We find another cause in circumstances. Want and unjust exclusion precipitated David and his men into this rebellion. It is common enough to lay too much weight on circumstances. Nothing can be more false than the popular theory that ameliorated outward condition is the panacea for the evils of Society. The gospel principle begins from within and works outwards. The world's principle begins with the outward condition, and expects to influence inwardly. To expect that by changing the world without, in order to suit the world within, by taking away all difficulties and removing all temptations, instead of hardening the man within against the force of outward temptation—to adapt the lot to the man, instead of moulding the spirit to the lot, is to reverse the gospel method of procedure. Nevertheless, even that favourite speculation of theorists, that perfect circumstances will produce perfect character, contains a truth. Circumstances of outward condition are not the sole efficients in the production of character, but they are efficients which must not be ignored. Favourable condition will not produce excellence: but the want of it often hinders excellence. It is true that vice leads to poverty: all the moralizers tell us that, but it is also true that poverty leads to vice. There are some in this world to whom, speaking humanly, social injustice and social inequalities have made goodness impossible. Take, for instance, the case of these bandits on Mount Carmel. Some of them were outlawed by their own crimes, but others doubtless by debts not wilfully contracted—one at least, David, by a most unjust and unrighteous per-

secution. And these men, excluded, needy, exasperated by a sense of wrong, untaught outcasts, could you gravely expect from them obedience, patience, meekness, religious resignation? Yes, my brethren, that is exactly the marvellous impossibility people do most inconsistently expect; and there are no bounds to their astonishment if they do not get what they expect:—Superhuman honesty from starving men, to whom life by hopelessness has become a gambler's desperate chance!—chivalrous loyalty and high forbearance from creatures to whom the order of society has presented itself only as an unjust system of partiality! We forget that forbearance and obedience are the very last and highest lessons learned by the spirit in its most careful training. By those unhallowed conventionalisms through which we, like heathens, and not like Christians, crush the small offender and court the great one—that damnable cowardice by which we banish the seduced and half admire the seducer—by which, in defiance of all manliness and all generosity, we punish the weak and tempted, and let the tempter go free:—by all these we make men and women outcasts, and then expect from them the sublimest graces of reverence and resignation!

II. The message of the Church to the man of wealth.

The message of the Church contains those principles of Life which, carried out, would, and hereafter will, realize the Divine Order of Society. The revealed Message does not create the facts of our humanity—it simply makes them known. The Gospel did not make

God our Father—it authoritatively reveals that He is so. It did not create a new duty of loving one another—it revealed the old duty which existed from eternity, and must exist as long as Humanity is Humanity. It was no "new commandment," but an old commandment which had been heard from the beginning. The Church of God is that living body of men who are called by Him out of the world, not to be the inventors of a new social system, but to exhibit in the world by word and life, chiefly by life, what Humanity is, was, and will be, in the Idea of God. Now, so far as the social economy is concerned, the revelations of the Church will coincide with the discoveries of a Scientific Political Economy. Political Economy discovers slowly the facts of the immutable laws of social well-being. But the living principles of those laws, which cause them to be obeyed, Christianity has revealed to loving hearts long before. The Spirit discovers them to the spirit. For instance, Political Economy, gazing on such a fact as this of civil war, would arrive at the same principles which the Church arrives at. She too would say, Not selfishness, but love. Only that she arrives at these principles by experience, not intuition: by terrible lessons, not revelation: by revolutions, wars, and famines, not by spiritual impulses of charity.

And so because these principles were eternally true in humanity, we find in the conduct of Abigail towards David in this early age, not explicitly, but implicitly, the very principles which the Church of Christ has given to the world; and more, the very principles which a

sound economy would sanction. In her reply to David we have the anticipation by a loving heart of those duties which selfish prudence must have taught at last.

1. The spiritual dignity of man as man. Recollect David was the poor man, but Abigail, the high-born lady, admits his worth: "The Lord will certainly make my lord a sure house; because my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days." Here is a truth revealed to that age. Nabal's day, and the day of such as Nabal, is past—another power is rising above the horizon. David's cause is God's cause. Worth does not mean what a man is worth—you must find some better definition than that.

Now this is the very truth revealed in the Incarnation. David, Israel's model king; the king by the grace of God, not by the conventional rules of human choice, is a shepherd's son. Christ, the King who is to reign over our regenerated humanity, is humbly born—the poor woman's Son. That is the Church's message to the man of wealth, and a message which it seems has to be learned afresh in every age. It was new to Nabal. It was new to the men of the age of Christ. In His day, they were offended in Him, because He was humbly born. "Is not this the carpenter's son?" It is the offence now. They who retain those superstitious ideas of the eternal superiority of rank and wealth, have the first principles of the Gospel yet to learn. How can they believe in the Son of Mary? They may honour Him with the lip, they deny Him in His brethren.

Whoever helps to keep alive that ancient lie of upper and lower, resting the distinction not on official authority or personal worth, but on wealth and title, is doing his part to hinder the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom.

Now the Church of Christ proclaims that truth in baptism. She speaks of a kingdom here in which all are, as spirits, equal. She reveals a fact. She does not affect to create the fact. She says—not hypothetically, "This child *may* be the child of God if prevenient grace has taken place, or if hereafter he shall have certain feelings and experiences:" nor, "Hereby I create this child magically by supernatural power in one moment, what it was not a moment before:" but she says, authoritatively, "I pronounce this child the child of God: the brother of Christ the First-born—the son of Him who has taught us by His Son to call Him *our* Father, not *my* Father. Whatever that child may become hereafter in fact, he is now by right of creation and redemption the child of God. Rich or poor, titled or untitled, he shares the spiritual nature of the second Adam—the Lord from heaven."

2. The second truth expressed by Abigail was the Law of Sacrifice. She did not heal the grievance with smooth words. Starving men are not to be pacified by professions of good will. She brought her two hundred loaves, and her two skins of wine, her five sheep ready dressed, &c. A princely provision!

You might have said this was waste—half would have been enough. But the truth is, liberality is a most real

economy. She could not stand there calculating the smallest possible expense at which the affront might be wiped out. True economy is to pay liberally and fairly for faithful service. The largest charity is the best economy. Nabal had had a faithful servant. He should have counted no expense too great to retain his services, instead of cheapening and depreciating them. But we wrong Abigail if we call this economy or calculation. In fact, had it been done on economical principles, it would have failed. Ten times this sum from Nabal would not have arrested revenge. For Nabal it was too late. Concessions extracted by fear only provoke exaction further. The poor know well what is given because it must be given, and what is conceded from a sense of justice. They *feel* only what is real. David's men and David felt that these were not the gifts of a sordid calculation, but the offerings of a generous heart. And it won them—their gratitude—their enthusiasm—their unfeigned homage.

This is the attractive power of that great Law, whose highest Expression was the Cross. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Say what you will, it is not interest, but the sight of noble qualities, and true sacrifice, which commands the devotion of the world. Yea,—even the bandit and the outcast will bend before that as before a Divine thing. In one form or another it draws all men—it commands all men.

Now this the Church proclaims as part of its special message to the rich. It says that the Divine Death was a Sacrifice. It declares that death to be the law of

every life which is to be like His. It says that the Law, which alone can interpret the mystery of life, is the self-sacrifice of Christ. It proclaims the law of His life to have been this: "For their sakes I devote (sanctify) Myself, that they also may be devoted through the Truth." In other words, the Self-sacrifice of the Redeemer was to be the living principle and law of the self-devotion of His people. It asserts that to be the principle which alone can make any human life a true life. "I fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for His body's sake, which is the church." We have petrified *that* Sacrifice into a dead theological dogma, about the exact efficacy of which we dispute metaphysically, and charge each other with heresy. That atonement will become a living fact only when we humbly recognise in it the eternal fact that sacrifice is the Law of life. The very mockers at the crucifixion unwittingly declared the principle: "He saved others: Himself he cannot save." Of course—How could He save Himself who had to save others? You can only save others when you have ceased to think of saving your own soul—you can only truly bless when you have done with the pursuit of personal happiness. Did you ever hear of a soldier who saved his country by making it his chief work to secure himself? And was the Captain of our salvation to become the Saviour by contravening that universal law of Sacrifice, or by obeying it?

Brother men, the early Church gave expression to that principle of sacrifice in a very touching way. They

had all things in common. "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." They failed, not because they declared that, but because men began to think that the duty of sharing was compulsory. They proclaimed principles which were unnatural, inasmuch as they set aside all personal feelings, which are part of our nature too. They virtually compelled private property to cease, because he who retained private property when all were giving up was degraded, and hence became a hypocrite and liar, like Ananias. But let us not lose the truth which they expressed in an exaggerated way: "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own." Property is sacred. It is *private* property; if it were not, it could not be sacrificed. If it were to be shared equally by the idle and the industrious, there could be no love in giving. Property is the rich man's own. Nabal is right in saying, My bread—my water—my flesh. But there is a higher Right which says, It is not yours. And that voice speaks to every rich man in one way or another, according as he is selfish or unselfish: coming as a voice of terror or a voice of blessing. It came to Nabal with a double curse, turning his heart into stone with the vision of the danger and the armed ranks of David's avengers; and laying on David's soul the sin of intended murder. It came to the heart of Abigail with a double blessing: blessing her who gave and him who took. To the spirit of the Cross alone we look as the Remedy for social evils. When the people of this great country,

especially the rich, shall have been touched with the spirit of the Cross to a largeness of sacrifice of which they have not dreamed as yet, there will be an atonement between the Rights of Labour and the Rights of Property.

3. The last part of the Church's message to the man of wealth touches the matter of rightful influence.

Very remarkable is the demeanour of David towards Nabal, as contrasted with his demeanour towards Abigail. In the one case, defiance, and a haughty self-assertion of equality—in the other, deference, respect, and the most eloquent benediction. It was not, therefore, against the wealthy class, but against individuals of the class, that the wrath of these men burned.

See, then, the folly and the falsehood of the sentimental regret that there is no longer any reverence felt towards superiors. There *is* reverence to superiors, if only it can be shown that they are superiors. Reverence is deeply rooted in the heart of humanity—you cannot tear it out. Civilization — science — progress — only change its direction: they do not weaken its force. If it no longer bows before crucifixes and candles, priests and relics, it is not extinguished towards what is truly sacred and what is priestly in man. The fiercest revolt against false authority is only a step towards submission to rightful authority. Emancipation from false lords only sets the heart free to honour true ones. The free-born David will not do homage to Nabal. Well, now go and mourn over the degenerate age which no longer feels respect for that which is above it. But behold—

David has found a something nobler than himself. Feminine charity—sacrifice and justice—and in gratitude and profoundest respect he bows to that. The state of society which is coming is not one of protection and dependence: nor one of mysterious authority, and blind obedience to it—nor one in which any class shall be privileged by Divine right, and another remain in perpetual tutelage; but it is one in which unselfish services and personal qualities will command, by Divine right, gratitude and admiration, and secure a true and spiritual leadership.

Oh! let not the rich misread the signs of the times, or mistake their brethren: they have less and less respect for titles and riches: for vestments and ecclesiastical pretensions: but they have a real respect for superior knowledge and superior goodness: they listen like children to those whom they believe to know a subject better than themselves. Let those who know it say, whether there is not something inexpressibly touching and even humbling in the large, hearty, manly, English reverence and love which the working men show towards those who love and serve them truly, and save them from themselves and from doing wrong. See how David's feelings gush forth—"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou which hast kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand."

The rich and the great may have that love if they will.

To conclude. Doubtless, David was wrong: he had no right even to redress wrongs thus: patience was his divinely appointed duty; and doubtless in such circumstances we should be very ready to preach submission and to blame David. Alas! we, the clergy of the Church of England, have been only too ready to do this: for three long centuries we have taught submission to the powers that be, as if that were the only text in Scripture bearing on the relations between the ruler and the ruled. Rarely have we dared to demand of the powers that be, justice; of the wealthy man and the titled, duties. We have produced folios of slavish flattery upon the Divine Right of Power. Shame on us! we have not denounced the wrongs done to weakness: and yet for one text in the Bible which requires submission and patience from the poor, you will find a hundred which denounce the vices of the rich—in the writings of the noble old Jewish prophets, *that*, and almost that only—*that* in the Old Testament, with a deep roll of words that sound like Sinai thunders:—and *that* in the New Testament in words less impassioned and more calmly terrible from the apostles and their Master:—and woe to us in the great day of God, if we have been the sycophants of the rich instead of the Redressers of the poor man's wrongs: woe to us if we have been tutoring David into respect to his superior, Nabal, and forgotten that David's cause, not Nabal's, is the cause of God.

XVIII.

Preached July 13, 1851.

FREEDOM BY THE TRUTH.

JOHN viii. 32.—"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

IF these words were the only record we possessed of the Saviour's teaching, it may be that they would be insufficient to prove His personal Deity, but they would be enough to demonstrate the Divine Character of His mission.

Observe the greatness of the aim, and the wisdom of the means.

The aim was to make all men free. He saw around Him servitude in every form—man in slavery to man, and race to race: His own countrymen in bondage to the Romans—slaves both of Jewish and Roman masters, frightfully oppressed: men trembling before priestcraft: and those who were politically and ecclesiastically free, in worse bondage still, the rich and rulers slaves to their own passions.

Conscious of His inward Deity and of His Father's intentions, He, without hurry, without the excitement which would mark the mere earthly Liberator, calmly said, "Ye shall be free."

See, next, the peculiar wisdom of the means.

The craving for liberty was not new—it lies deep in human nature. Nor was the promise of satisfying it new. Empirics, charlatans, demagogues, and men who were not charlatans nor demagogues, had promised in vain.

1. First they had tried by force. Wherever force has been used on the side of freedom we honour it; the names which we pronounce in boyhood with enthusiasm are those of the liberators of nations and the vindicators of liberty. Israel had had such: Joshua—the Judges—Judas Maccabæus. Had the Son of God willed so to come, even on human data the success was certain. I waive the truth of His inward Deity: of His miraculous power: of His power to summon to His will more than twelve legions of angels. I only notice now that men's hearts were full of Him: ripe for revolt: and that at a single word of His, thrice three hundred thousand swords would have started from their scabbards.

But had He so come, one nation might have gained liberty; not the race of man: moreover, the liberty would only have been independence of a foreign conqueror.

Therefore as a conquering king He did not come.

2. Again, it might have been attempted by legislative enactment. Perhaps only once has this been done successfully, and by a single effort. When the names of conquerors shall have been forgotten, and modern civilization shall have become obsolete—when England's shall be ancient history, one act of hers will be remem-

bered as a record of her greatness, that act by which in costly sacrifice she emancipated her slaves.

But one thing England could not do. She could give freedom—she could not fit for freedom, not make it lasting. The stroke of a monarch's pen will do the one —the discipline of ages is needed for the other. Give to-morrow a constitution to some feeble eastern nation, or a horde of savages, and in half a century, they will be subjected again.

Therefore the Son of Man did not come to free the world by legislation.

3. It might be done by civilization. Civilization does free—intellect equalizes. Every step of civilization is a victory over some lower instinct. But civilization contains within itself the elements of a fresh servitude. Man conquers the powers of nature and becomes in turn their slave. The workmen is in bondage to the machinery which does his will: his hours, his wages, his personal habits determined by it. The rich man fills his house with luxuries, and cannot do without them. A highly civilized community is a very spectacle of servitude. Man is there a slave to dress, to hours, to manners, to conventions, to etiquette. Things contrived to make his life more easy become his masters.

Therefore Jesus did not talk of the progress of the species nor the growth of civilization, He did not trust the world's hope of liberty to a right division of property. But he freed the inner man, that so the outer might become free too. "Ye shall know the truth, and the *truth* shall make you free."

I. The truth that liberates.

II. The liberty which truth gives.

The truth which Christ taught was chiefly on these three points—God: Man: Immortality.

1. God. Blot out the thought of God, a Living Person, and life becomes mean, existence unmeaning, the universe dark, and resolve is left without a stay, aspiration and duty without a support.

The Son exhibited God as Love: and so that fearful bondage of the mind to the necessity of Fate was broken. A living Lord had made the world; and its dark and unintelligible mystery meant good, not evil. He manifested Him as a Spirit; and if so, the only worship that could please Him must be a spirit's worship. Not by sacrifices is God pleased: nor by droned litanies and liturgies: nor by fawning and flattery: nor is His wrath bought off by blood. Thus was the chain of superstition rent asunder; for superstition is wrong views of God; exaggerated or inadequate, and wrong conceptions of the way to please Him.

And so when the woman of Samaria brought the conversation to that old ecclesiastical question about consecrated buildings, whether on Mount Gerizim or on Mount Moriah, God was the more acceptably adored, He cut the whole conversation short by the enunciation of a single truth: "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

2. Truth respecting man.

We are a mystery to ourselves. Go to any place

where the nations have brought together their wealth and their inventions, and before the victories of mind you stand in reverence. Then stop to look at the passing crowds who have attained that civilization. Think of their low aims, their mean lives, their conformation only a little higher than that of brute creatures, and a painful sense of degradation steals upon you. So great, and yet so mean! And so of individuals. There is not one here whose feelings have not been deeper than we can fathom—nor one who would venture to tell out to his brother man the mean, base thoughts that have crossed his heart during the last hour. Now this riddle He solved—He looked on man as fallen, but magnificent in his ruin. We, catching that thought from Him, speak as He spoke. But none that were born of woman ever felt this or lived this like him. Beneath the vilest outside He saw this—A human soul, capable of endless growth: aud thence He treated with what for want of a better term we may call respect, all who approached Him; not because they were titled Rabbis, or rich Pharisees, but because they were men.

Here was a germ for freedom. It is not the shackle on the wrist that constitutes the slave—but the loss of self-respect—to be treated as degraded till he feels degraded—to be subjected to the lash till he believes that he deserves the lash: and liberty is to suspect and yet reverence self: to suspect the tendency which leaves us ever on the brink of fall: to reverence that within us which is allied to God, redeemed by God the Son, and made a temple of the Holy Ghost.

Perhaps we have seen an insect or reptile imprisoned in wood or stone. How it got there is unknown—how the particles of wood in years, or of stone in ages, grew round it, is a mystery, but not a greater mystery than the question of how man became incarcerated in evil. At last the day of emancipation came. The axe stroke was given: and the light came in, and the warmth: and the gauze wings expanded, and the eye looked bright: and the living Thing stepped forth, and you saw that there was not its home. Its home was the free air of heaven.

Christ taught that truth of the human soul. It is not in its right place. It never is in its right place in the dark prison-house of sin. Its home is freedom, and the breath of God's life.

3. Truth respecting immortality.

He taught that this life is not all: that it is only a miserable state of human infancy. He taught that in words: by His life, and by His Resurrection.

This, again, was freedom. If there be a faith that cramps and enslaves the soul, it is the idea that this life is all. If there be one that expands and elevates, it is the thought of immortality: and this, observe, is something quite distinct from the selfish desire of happiness. It is not to enjoy, but to *be* that we long for. To enter into more and higher life: a craving which we can only part with when we sink below humanity, and forfeit it.

This was the martyr' strength. They were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might attain a better

Resurrection. In that hope, and the knowledge of that truth, they were free from the fear of pain and death.

II. The nature of the liberty which truth gives.

1. Political freedom.

It was our work, last Sunday, to show that Christianity does not directly interfere with political questions. But we should have only half done our work, if we had not also learned that, mediately and indirectly, it must influence them. Christ's gospel did not promise political freedom, yet it gave it: more surely than conqueror, reformer, or patriot, that gospel will bring about a true liberty at last.

This, not by theories nor by schemes of constitutions, but by the revelations of Truths. God a Spirit: man His child; redeemed and sanctified. Before that spiritual equality, all distinctions between peer and peasant, monarch and labourer, privileged and unprivileged, vanish. A better man, or a wiser man than I, is in my presence, and I feel it a mockery to be reminded that I am his superior in rank.

Let us hold that truth; let us never weary of proclaiming it: and the truth shall make us free at last.

2. Mental independence.

Slavery is that which cramps powers. The worst slavery is that which cramps the noblest powers. Worse therefore than he who manacles the hands and feet, is he who puts fetters on the mind, and pretends to demand that men shall think, and believe, and feel thus

and thus, because others so believed, and thought, and felt before.

In Judæa—life was become a set of forms, and religion a congeries of traditions. One living word from the lips of Christ, and the mind of the world was free.

Later, a mountain mass of superstition had gathered round the Church, atom by atom, and grain by grain. Men said that the soul was saved by doing and believing what the priesthood taught. Then the heroes of the Reformation spoke. They said the soul of man is saved by the grace of God: a much more credible hypothesis. Once more the mind of the world was free: and free by Truth.

There is a tendency in the masses always to think—not what is true, but—what is respectable, correct, orthodox: is that authorized? we ask. It comes partly from cowardice, partly from indolence: from habit: from imitation: from the uncertainty and darkness of all moral truths, and the dread of timid minds to plunge into the investigation of them. Now, truth known and believed respecting God and man, frees from this, by warning of individual responsibility. But responsibility is personal. It cannot be delegated to another, and thrown off upon a church. Before God, face to face, each soul must stand, to give account.

Do not, however, confound mental independence with mental pride. It may, it ought to co-exist with the deepest humility. For that mind alone is free which, conscious ever of its own feebleness, feeling hourly its own liability to err, turning thankfully to light from

whatever side it may come, does yet refuse to give up that right, with which God has invested it of judging or to abrogate its own responsibility, and so, humbly, and even awfully, resolves to have an opinion, a judgment, a decision of its own.

3. Superiority to temptation.

It is not enough to define the liberty which Christ promises as freedom from sin. Many circumstances will exempt from sin which do not yet confer that liberty "where the Spirit of the Lord is." Childhood, paralysis, ill health, the impotence of old age, may remove the capacity and even the desire of transgression: but the child, the paralytic, the old man, are not free through the Truth.

Therefore, to this definition we must add, that one whom Christ liberates is free by his own will. It is not that he would and cannot: but that he can, and will not. Christian liberty is right will, sustained by love, and made firm by faith in Christ.

This may be seen by considering the opposite of liberty—moral bondage. Go to the intemperate man in the morning, when his head aches, his hand trembles, his throat burns, and his whole frame is relaxed and unstrung: he is ashamed, hates his sin, would not do it. Go to him at night, when the power of habit is on him like a spell, and he obeys the mastery of his craving. He can use the language of Rom. vii.: "That which he would, he does not; but the evil that he hates, that does he." Observe, he is not in possession of a true self. It is not he, but sin which dwelleth in him, that

does it. A power which is not himself, which is not he, commands him against himself. And that is Slavery.

This is a gross case, but in every more refined instance the slavery is just as real. Wherever a man would and cannot, there is servitude. He may be unable to control his expenditure, to rouse his indolence, to check his imagination. Well—he is not free. He may boast, as the Jews did, that he is Abraham's son, or any other great man's son: that he belongs to a free country: that he never was in bondage to any man; but free in the freedom of the Son he is not.

4. Superiority to fear.

Fear enslaves, courage liberates—and that always. Whatever a man intensely dreads, that brings him into bondage, if it be above the fear of God, and the reverence of duty. The apprehension of pain, the fear of death, the dread of the world's laugh, of poverty, or the loss of reputation, enslave alike.

From such fear Christ frees, and through the power of the truths I have spoken of. He who lives in the habitual contemplation of immortality cannot be in bondage to time, or enslaved by transitory temptations. I do not say he *will* not, "he *cannot* sin," saith the Scripture, while that faith is living. He who feels his soul's dignity, knowing what he is and who, redeemed by God the Son, and freed by God the Spirit, cannot cringe, nor pollute himself, nor be mean. He who aspires to gaze undazzled on the intolerable brightness of that One before whom Israel veiled their faces, will scarcely quail before any earthly fear.

This is not picture-painting. This is not declamation. These are things that have been. There have been men on this earth of God's, of whom it was simply true that it was easier to turn the sun from its course than them from the paths of honour. There have been men like John the Baptist, who could speak the truth which had made their own spirits free, with the axe above their neck. There have been men, redeemed in their inmost being by Christ, on whom tyrants and mobs have done their worst, and when, like Stephen, the stones crashed in upon their brain, or when their flesh hissed and crackled in the flames, were calmly superior to it all. The power of evil had laid its shackles on the flesh: but the mind, and the soul, and the heart were free.

We conclude with two inferences:

1. To cultivate the love of truth. I do not mean veracity: that is another thing. Veracity is the correspondence between a proposition and a man's belief. Truth is the correspondence of the proposition with fact. The love of truth is the love of realities: the determination to rest upon facts, and not on semblances. Take an illustration of the way in which the habit of cultivating truth is got. Two boys see a misshapen, hideous object in the dark. One goes up to the cause of his terror, examines it, learns what it is; he knows the truth, and the truth has made him free. The other leaves it in mystery and unexplained vagueness, and is a slave for life to superstitious and indefinite terrors. Romance, prettiness, "dim religious light," awe and mystery—these are not the atmosphere of Christ's gospel

of liberty. Base the heart on facts. The truth alone can make you free.

2. See what a Christian is. Our society is divided into two classes. Those who are daring, inquisitive, but restrained by no reverence, and kept back by little religion. Those who may be called religious: but, with all their excellences, we cannot help feeling that the elements of their character are feminine rather than masculine, and that they have no grasp or manly breadth, that they hold on feeling rather than on truth.

Now, see what a Christian is, drawn by the hand of Christ. He is a man on whose clear and open brow God has set the stamp of truth: one whose very eye beams bright with honour; in whose very look and bearing you may see freedom, manliness, veracity: a brave man —a noble man—frank, generous, true; with, it may be, many faults:—whose freedom may take the form of impetuosity or rashness, but the form of meanness never. Young Men! if you have been deterred from religion by its apparent feebleness and narrowness, remember—It is a manly thing to be a Christian.

XIX.

THE KINGDOM OF THE TRUTH.

Preached at the Autumn Assizes held at Lewes, 1852.

JOHN xviii. 37.—"Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

THE Church is the kingdom of God on earth, and the whole fabric of the Christian Religion rests on the monarchy of Christ. The Hebrew prisoner who stood before the Roman Judge claimed to be the King of men: and eighteen centuries have only verified his claim. There is not a man bearing the Christian name, who does not in one form or another acknowledge Him to be the Sovereign of his soul.

The question therefore at once suggests itself—On what title does this claim rest?

Besides the title on which the Messiah grounded His pretensions to be the Ruler of a kingdom, three are

conceivable. The title of force: the title of prescriptive authority: or the title of incontrovertible reasoning.

Had the Messiah founded His kingdom upon the basis of Force, He would simply have been a rival of the Cæsars. The imperial power of Rome rested on that Principle. This was all that Pilate meant at first by the question, "Art thou a king?" As a Roman he had no other conception of rule. Right well had Rome fulfilled her mission as the iron kingdom which was to command by strength, and give to the world the principles of Law. But that kingdom was wasting when these words were spoken. For seven hundred years had the empire been building itself up. It gave way at last, and was crumbled into fragments by its own ponderous massiveness. To use the language of the prophet Daniel, miry clay had mixed with the kingdom of iron, and the softer nations which had been absorbed into it broke down its once invincible strength, by corrupting and enervating its citizens: the conquerors of the world dropped the sword from a grasp grown nerveless. The Empire of strength was passing away; for no kingdom founded on force is destined to permanence. "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

Before Pontius Pilate, Christ distinctly disclaimed this Right of Force as the foundation of his sovereignty. "If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight: but now is my kingdom not from hence." (v. 36.)

The next conceivable basis of a universal kingdom is

prescriptive authority. The scribes and priests who waited outside for their victim conceived of such a kingdom. They *had* indeed already an ecclesiastical kingdom which dated back far beyond the origin of Rome. They claimed to rule on a title such as this—"It is written." But neither on this title did the Saviour found His claim. He spoke lightly of institutions which were venerable from age. He contravened opinions which were grey with the hoar of ages. It may be, that at times He *defended* Himself on the authority of Moses, by showing that what He taught was not in opposition to Moses; but it is observable that He never rested His claims as a Teacher, or as the Messiah, on that foundation. The scribes fell back on this—"It has been said;" or, "It is written." Christ taught, as the men of His day remarked, on an authority very different from that of the scribes. Not even on His own authority—He did not claim that His words should be recognised because He said them: but because they were true. "If I say the truth, why do yet not believe me?" Prescription—personal authority—these were not the basis of His kingdom.

One more possible title remains. He might have claimed to rule over men on the ground of incontrovertible demonstration of His principles. This was the ground taken by every philosopher who was the founder of a sect. Apparently, after the failure of his first guess, Pilate thought in the second surmise that this was what Jesus meant by calling Himself a king. When he heard of a kingdom, he thought he had before him

a rival of Cæsar: but when Truth was named, he seems to have fancied that he was called to try a rival of the philosophers: some new candidate for a system: some new pretender of a truth which was to dethrone its rival system.

This seems to be implied in the bitter question, "What is Truth?" For the history of opinion in those days was like the history of opinion in our own: religions against religions, philosophies against philosophies: religion and philosophy opposed to one another: the opinion of to-day dethroned by the opinion of to-morrow: the heterodoxy of this age reckoned the orthodoxy of the succeeding one. And Pilate, feeling the vainness and the presumption of these pretensions, having lived to see failure after failure of systems which pretended to teach That which is, smiled bitterly at the enthusiast who again asserted confidently His claims to have discovered the undiscoverable. There broke from his lips a bitter, half-sarcastic, half-sad exclamation of hopeless scepticism, "What is Truth?"

And, indeed, had the Redeemer claimed this — to overthrow the doctrine of the Porch and of the Academy, and to enthrone Christianity as a Philosophy of Life upon their ruins, by argument, that sceptical cry would have been not ill-timed.

In these three ways have men attempted the Propagation of the Gospel. By force, when the Church ruled by persecution—by prescriptive authority, when she claimed infallibility, or any modification of infallibility in the Popery of Rome or the Popery of the pulpit—

by Reasoning, in the age of "evidences," when she only asked to have her proofs brought forward and calmly heard, pledged herself to rule the world by the conviction of the understanding, and laid the foundations of rationalism deep and broad. Let us hear the claim of the King Himself. He rested His royal rights on His testimony to the Truth. "Thou sayest, for I am a King (a more correct translation); to this end was I born, to bear witness to the Truth." The mode in which the subjects of the kingdom were brought beneath His sway was by assimilation. "Every one that is of the Truth, heareth My voice." These, then, are our points.

I. The basis of the kingly rule of Christ.
II. The qualifications of the subjects of the kingdom.

I. The basis of the kingly rule of Christ.

Christ is a king in virtue of His being a witness to the truth. "Thou sayest right, To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth."

Truth is used here in a sense equivalent to reality —for "truth" substitute reality, and it will become more intelligible. For "the truth" is an ambiguous expression, limited in its application, meaning often nothing more than a theological creed, or a few dogmas of a creed which this or that party have agreed to call "the truth." It would indeed fritter down the majesty of the Redeemer's life, to say that He was a witness for the truth of any number of theological dogmas.

Himself—His Life, were a witness to Truth in the sense of Reality. The realities of life—the realities of the universe—to these His every act and word bore testimony. He was as much a witness to the truth of the purity of domestic life as to the truth of the doctrine of the Incarnation: to the truth of Goodness being identical with Greatness as much as to the doctrine of the Trinity—and more—His mind corresponded with Reality as the dial with the sun.

Again, in being a witness to Reality, we are to understand something very much deeper than the statement that He spoke truly. There is a wide difference between truthfulness and mere veracity. Veracity implies a correspondence between words and thoughts: truthfulness, a correspondence between thoughts and realities. To be veracious, it is only necessary that a man give utterance to his convictions: to be true, it is needful that his convictions have affinity with Fact.

Let us take some illustrations of this distinction. The Prophet tells of men who put sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet: who called good evil, and evil good; yet these were veracious men; for to them evil *was* good, and bitter *was* sweet:—There was a correspondence between their opinions and their words: this was veracity. But there was no correspondence between their opinions and eternal Fact: this was untruthfulness. They spoke their opinions truly, but their opinions were not true. The Pharisees in the time of Christ were men of veracity. What they thought they said. They thought that Christ was an impostor. They believed

that to tithe mint, anise, and cummin, was as acceptable to God as to be just, and merciful, and true. It was their conviction that they were immeasurably better than publicans and profligates: yet veracious as they were, the title perpetually affixed to them is, "Ye hypocrites." The life they led being a false life, is called, in the phraseology of the Apostle John, a lie.

If a man speak a careless slander against another, believing it, he has not sinned against veracity: but the carelessness which has led him into so grave an error, effectually bars his claim to clear truthfulness. He is a veracious witness, but not a true one. Or a man may have taken up second-hand, indolently, religious views: may believe them: defend them vehemently,—Is he a man of truth? Has he bowed before the majesty of truth with that patient, reverential humbleness which is the mark of those who love her?

Imagination has pictured to itself a domain in which every one who enters should be compelled to speak only what he thought, and pleased itself by calling such domain the Palace of Truth. A palace of veracity, if you will; but no temple of the truth:—a place where every one would be at liberty to utter his own crude unrealities,—to bring forth his delusions, mistakes, half-formed hasty judgments: where the depraved ear would reckon discord harmony: and the depraved eye mistake colour: the depraved moral taste take Herod or Tiberius for a king, and shout, beneath the Redeemer's Cross, "Himself He cannot save." A temple of the truth? Nay, only a palace echoing with veracious falsehoods:

a Babel of confused sounds, in which egotism would rival egotism, and truth would be each man's own lie. Far, far more is implied here than that the Son of Man spoke veraciously, in saying that He was a Witness to the Truth.

Again, when it is said that He was a Witness to the Truth, it is implied that His very Being, here, *manifested* to the world Divine realities. Human nature is but meant to be a witness to the Divine; the true Humanity is a manifestion—or reflection of God. And that is Divine Humanity, in which the Humanity is a perfect representation of the Divine. "We behold," says the Apostle Paul, "in Christ, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord." And, to borrow and carry on the metaphor, the difference between Christ and other men is this; they are imperfect reflections, He a perfect one, of God.

There are mirrors which are concave, which magnify the thing that they reflect: there are mirrors convex, which diminish it. And we, in like manner, represent the Divine in a false, distorted way. Fragments of truth torn out of connection: snatches of harmony joined without unity. We exaggerate and diminish till all becomes untrue. We bring forth our own fancies, our own idiosyncrasies, our own imaginations: and the image of God can be no longer recognised.

In One alone has the Divine been so blended with the Human, that, as the ocean mirrors every star and every tint of blue upon the sky, so was the earthly Life of Christ the Life of God on earth.

Now, observe, that the perfection of humanity consists in faithful imitation of, or witness borne to, the Mind and Life of God. Whoever has studied and understood the Life of Christ will have remarked, not without surprise, that the whole principle of His existence was the habit of unceasing imitation. Listen to a few instances of this.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but that which He seeth the Father do." "The words which I speak I speak not of myself, but the Father which is with me, He doeth the works." Do we remember the strange and startling principle on which He defends His infraction of the literal, legal Sabbath? "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." God the Father works all the Sabbath-day. So may Man, His Son. Do we recollect the ground on which He enforces forgiveness of injuries? A strange ground surely, which would never have occurred except to One whose life was habitual imitation. "Love your enemies: do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you: that ye may be the children of (that is, resemble) your Father . . . for He sendeth His rain upon the just and upon the unjust."

This, then, is Man's: this was the Son of Man's relation to the Truth. Man is but a learner—a devout recipient of a revelation—here to listen with open ear devoutly for that which he shall hear; to gaze and watch for that which He shall see. Man can do no more. He cannot create Truth: he can only bear witness to it: he has no proud right of private judgment: he can

only listen and report that which is in the universe. If he does not repeat and witness to that, he speaketh of his own, and forthwith ceaseth to be true. He is a liar and the *father* of it, because he creates it. Each man in his vocation is in the world to do this;—as truly as it was said by Christ, may it be said by each of us, even by those from whose trades and professions it seems most alien, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness to the Truth."

The architect is here to be a witness. He succeeds only so far as he is a witness, and a true one. The lines and curves, the acanthus on his column, the proportions, all are successful and beautiful, only so far as they are true: the report of an eye which has lain open to God's world. If he build his lighthouse to resist the storm, the law of imitation bids him build it after the shape of the spreading oak which has defied the tempest. If man construct the ship which is to cleave the waters, calculation or imitation builds it on the model upon which the Eternal Wisdom has already constructed the fish's form. The artist is a witness to the truth; or he will never attain the beautiful. So is the agriculturist; or he will never reap a harvest. So is the statesman, building up a nation's polity on the principles which time has proved true, or else all his work crumbles down in revolution: for national revolution is only the Divine Rejection stamped on the social falsehood—which cannot stand. In every department of life, man must work truly—as a witness. He is born for that, nothing else: and nothing else can he do. Man the Son can

do nothing of Himself, but that which He seeth God the Father do.

This was the Saviour's title to be a King; and His kingdom formed itself upon this law: "Every one that is of the Truth heareth my voice;" that Eternal law which makes truth assimilate all that is congenial to itself. Truth is like Life: whatever lives, absorbs into itself all that is congenial. The leaf that trembles in the wind assimilates the light of heaven to make its colour, and the sap of the parent stem—innumerable influences from heaven, and earth, and air, to make up its beautiful being.

So grew the Church of Christ: round Him as a centre, attracted by the truth: all that had in it harmony with His Divine Life and words, grew to Him (by gradual accretions): clung to Him as the iron to the magnet. All that were of His Spirit believed: all that had in them the Spirit of Sacrifice were attracted to His Cross. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

He taught not by elaborate trains of argument, like a scribe or a philosopher: He uttered His truths rather as detached intuitions, recognised by intuition, to be judged only by being felt. For instance, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." "It is more blessed to give than to receive." "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you." Prove that—by force—by authority—by argument—you cannot. It suffices that a man reply, "It is not so to me: it is more blessed to receive than it is to give." You have no reply: if he be not of the truth, you cannot make him

hear Christ's voice. The truth of Christ is true to the unselfish: a falsehood to the selfish. They that are of the truth, like Him, hear His voice: and if you ask the Christian's proof of the truth of such things, he has no other than this,—It is true to me, as any other intuitive truth is true—equals are equal, because my mind is so constituted that they seem so perforce. Purity is good, because my heart is so made that it feels it to be good.

Brother men,—the truer you are, the humbler, the nobler, the more will you feel Christ to be your King. You may be very little able to prove the King's Divine genealogy, or to appreciate those claims to your allegiance which arise out of His Eternal generation: but He will be your Sovereign and your Lord by that affinity of character which compels you to acknowledge His words and life to be Divine. "He that receiveth His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

II. We pass to the consideration of the qualification of the subjects of the Empire of the truth. Who are they that are of the Truth?

1. The first qualification is to *be* true: "He that *is* of the truth heareth My Voice." Truth lies in character. Christ did not simply *speak* truth: He *was* truth: true through and through; for truth is a thing, not of words, but of Life and Being. None but a Spirit can be true.

For example. The friends of Job spoke *words* of truth. Scarcely a maxim which they uttered could be impugned:

cold, hard, theological verities: but verities out of place, in that place cruel and untrue. Job spoke many words not strictly accurate—hasty, impetuous, blundering, wrong; but the whirlwind came, and, before the Voice of God, the veracious falsehoods were swept into endless nothingness: the *true* man, wrong, perplexed, in verbal error, stood firm: he was true though his sentences were not: turned to the truth as the sunflower to the sun: as the darkened plant imprisoned in the vault turns towards the light, struggling to solve the fearful enigma of his existence.

Job was a servant of the truth, being true in character.

2. The next qualification is integrity. But by integrity I do not mean simply sincerity or honesty; integrity rather according to the meaning of the word as its derivation interprets it—entireness—wholeness—soundness: that which Christ means when He says, "If thine eye be single or sound, thy whole body shall be full of light."

This integrity extends through the entireness or wholeness of the character. It is found in small matters as well as great; for the allegiance of the soul to truth is tested by small things rather than by those which are more important. There is many a man who would lose his life rather than perjure himself in a court of justice, whose life is yet a tissue of small insincerities. We think that we hate falsehood when we are only hating the consequences of falsehood. We resent hypocrisy, and treachery, and calumny, not because they are untrue,

but because they harm us. We hate the false calumny, but we are half pleased with the false praise. It is evidently not the element of untruth here that is displeasing, but the element of harmfulness. Now he is a man of integrity who hates untruth *as* untruth: who resents the smooth and polished falsehood of society which does no harm: who turns in indignation from the glittering whitened lie of sepulchral Pharisaism which injures no one. Integrity recoils from deceptions which men would almost smile to hear called deception. To a moral, pure mind, the artifices in every department of life are painful: the stained wood which passes for a more firm and costly material in a building, and deceives the eye by seeming what it is not, marble: the painting which is intended to be taken for a reality: the gilding which is meant to pass for gold; and the glass which is worn to look like jewels; for there is a moral feeling and a truthfulness in architecture, in painting, and in dress, as well as in the market-place, and in the senate, and in the judgment-hall.

"These are trifles." Yes, these are trifles—but it is just these trifles which go to the formation of character. He that is habituated to deceptions and artificialities in trifles, will try in vain to be true in matters of importance: for truth is a thing of habit rather than of will. You cannot in any given case, by any sudden and single effort, will to be true, if the habit of your life has been insincerity. And it is a fearful question, and a difficult one, how all these things, the atmosphere which we breathe of our daily life, may sap the very foundations

of the power of becoming a servant of the truth. Life becomes fictitious: and it passes into religion, till our very religion bases itself upon a figment too. We are not righteous, but we expect God to make believe that we are righteous, in virtue of some peculiar doctrines which we hold; and so our very righteousness becomes the fictitious righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, instead of the righteousness which is by faith, the righteousness of those who are the children of the kingdom of the truth.

3. Once more. He alone is qualified to be the subject of the King who *does* the truth. Christianity joins two things inseparably together: acting truly, and perceiving truly. Every day the eternal nature of that principle becomes more certain. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God.

It is a perilous thing to separate feeling from acting; to have learnt to feel rightly without acting rightly. It is a danger to which, in a refined and polished age, we are peculiarly exposed. The romance, the poem, and the sermon, teach us how to feel. Our feelings are delicately correct. But the danger is this:—feeling is given to lead to action; if feeling be suffered to awake without passing into duty, the character becomes untrue. When the emergency for real action comes, the feeling is, as usual, produced: but accustomed as it is to rise in fictitious circumstances without action, neither will it lead on to action in the real ones. "We pity wretchedness and shun the wretched." We utter sentiments,

just, honourable, refined, lofty—but somehow, when a truth presents itself in the shape of a duty, we are unable to perform it. And so such characters become by degrees like the artificial pleasure-grounds of bad taste, in which the waterfall does not fall, and the grotto offers only the refreshment of an imaginary shade, and the green hill does not strike the skies, and the tree does not grow. Their lives are a sugared crust of sweetness trembling over black depths of hollowness: more truly still, "whited sepulchres"—fair without to look upon, "within full of all uncleanness."

It is perilous again to separate thinking rightly from acting rightly. He is already half false who speculates on truth and does not do it. Truth is given, not to be contemplated, but to be done. Life is an action—not a thought. And the penalty paid by him who speculates on truth, is that by degrees the very truth he holds becomes to him a falsehood.

There is no truthfulness, therefore, except in the witness borne to God by doing His will—to live the truths we hold, or else they will be no truths at all. It was thus that He witnessed to the truth. He lived it. He spoke no touching truths for sentiment to dwell on, or thought to speculate upon. Truth with Him was a matter of life and death. He perilled His life upon the words He said. If He were true, the life of men was a painted life, and the woes he denounced unflinchingly would fall upon the Pharisees. But if *they* were true, or even strong, His portion in this life was the Cross.

Who is a true man? He who does the truth; and never holds a principle on which he is not prepared in any hour to act, and in any hour to risk the consequences of holding it.

I make in conclusion one remark. The kingly character of truth is exhibited strikingly in the calmness of the bearing of the Son of Man before His judge. Veracity is not necessarily dignified. There is a vulgar effrontery—a spirit of defiance which taunts, and braves, and challenges condemnation. It marks the man who is conscious of sincerity, but of nothing higher—whose confidence is in himself and his own honesty, and who is absorbed in the feeling, "I speak the truth and am a martyr." Again, the man of mere veracity is often violent, for what he says rests upon his own assertion: and vehemence of assertion is the only addition he can make to it. Such was the violence of Paul before Ananias. He was indignant at the injustice of being smitten contrary to the law; and the powerlessness of his position, the hopelessness of redress, joined to a conviction of the truth of what he said, produced that vehemence.

It has been often remarked that there is a great difference between theological and scientific controversy. Theologians are proverbially vituperative: because it is a question of veracity: the truth of their views, their moral perceptions. their intellectual acumen. There exists no test but argument on which they can fall back. If argument fails, all fails. But the man of science stands calmly on the facts of the universe. He is based

upon reality. All the opposition and controversy in the world cannot alter facts, nor prevent the facts being manifest at last. He can be calm because he is a witness for the Truth.

In the same way, but in a sense far deeper and more sacred, the Son of Man stood *calm*, rooted in the Truth. There was none of the egotism of self-conscious veracity in those placid, confident, dignified replies. This was not the feeling—"I hold the truth,"—but "I am witness to the truth." They might spit upon Him—kill Him—crucify Him—give His ashes to the winds—they could not alter the Truth by which He stood. Was not that His own feeling? "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

There was the kingly dignity of One, who, in Life and Death, stood firm on Truth as on a Rock.

In the name of Christ, I respectfully commend these thoughts for the special consideration of the present week, to those who will be pledged by oath to witness to the whole truth they know, and nothing but the truth: to those who, permitted by the merciful spirit of English jurisprudence, to watch that their client, if condemned, shall be condemned only according to the law—are yet not justified by the spirit of the life of Christ in falsifying or obscuring facts; and who, owing a high duty to a client, owe one yet higher to the Truth: and, lastly, to those whom the severe intellecual, and much more, moral training of the English bar has qualified for the high office of disentangling truth from the mazes of conflicting testimony.

From the trial-hour of Christ—from the Cross of the Son of God—there arises the principle to which all His life bore witness, that the first lesson of Christian life is this, Be true—and the second this, Be true—and the third this, Be true.

XX.

Preached November 7, 1852.

THE SCEPTICISM OF PILATE.

JOHN xviii. 38.—"Pilate saith unto him, What is truth!"

THE lesson which we are to draw from this verse must depend upon the view we take of the spirit in which the words were spoken. Some of the best commentators conceive them to have been words of mockery: and such is the great Lord Bacon's view. "'What is truth?' said jesting Pilate, and would not wait for a reply."

In all deference to such authority, we cannot believe that this sentence was spoken in jest. In Pilate's whole conduct there is no trace of such a tone. It betrays throughout much of uncertainty, nothing of lightness. He was cruelly tormented with the perplexity of efforts to save his prisoner. He risked his own reputation. He pronounced Him, almost with vehemence, innocent. He even felt awe, and was afraid of Him. In such a frame of mind, mockery was impossible.

Let us try to comprehend the character of the man who asked this question. His character will help us to judge the tone in which he asked. And his character, the character of his mind and life, are clear enough

from the few things recorded of him. He first hears what the people have to say; then asks the opinior of the priests—then comes back to Jesus—goes again to the priests and people—lends his ear—listens to the ferocity on the one hand, and feels the beauty on the other, balancing between them; and then he becomes bewildered, as a man of the world is apt to do who has had no groundwork of religious education, and hears superficial discussions on religious matters, and superficial charges, and superficial slanders, till he knows not what to think. What *could* come out of such procedure? Nothing but that cheerlessness of soul to which certainty respecting anything and everything here on earth seems unattainable. This is the exact mental state which we call scepticism.

Out of that mood, when he heard the enthusiast before him speak of a Kingdom of the Truth, there broke a sad, bitter, sarcastic sigh, "What is Truth?" Who knows anything about it? Another discoverer of the undiscoverable! *Jesting* Pilate! with Pilate the matter was beyond a jest. It was not a question put for the sake of information: for he went immediately out, and did not stay for information. It was not put for the sake of ridicule, for he went out to say, "I find no fault in Him." Sarcasm there was perhaps: but it was that mournful, bitter sarcasm which hides inward unrest in sneering words: that sad irony whose very laugh rings of inward wretchedness.

We shall pursue, from this question of Pilate, two lines of thought.

I. The causes of Pilate's scepticism.

II. The way appointed for discovering what is Truth.

I. The causes—and among these I name,

1st, Indecision of character.

Pilate's whole behaviour was a melancholy exhibition. He was a thing set up for the world's pity. See how he acts: he first throws the blame on the priests—and then acknowledges that all responsibility is his own: washes his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it." And then—"Knowest thou not that *I* have power to crucify thee, and power to release thee?" He pronounces Jesus innocent; and then, with wondrous inconsistency, delivers Him to be scourged: yields Him up to be crucified, and then tries every underhand expedient to save Him.

What is there in all this but vacillation of character lying at the root of unsettledness of opinion? Here is a man knowing the right and doing the wrong—not willing to do an act of manifest injustice if he can avoid it, but hesitating to prevent it, for fear of a charge against himself—pitiably vacillating because his hands were tied by the consciousness of past guilt and personal danger. How could such a man be certain about anything? What could a mind, wavering, unstable, like a feather on the wind, know or believe of solid, stable truth, which altered not, but remaineth like a rock amidst the vicissitudes of the ages and the changeful fashions of the minds of men? "A double-minded man

is unstable in all his ways." "He that is *of* the truth, heareth the voice of truth." To the untrue man all things are untrue. To the vacillating man, who cannot know his own mind, all things seem alterable, changeful, unfixed; just as to the man tossed at sea, all things motionless in themselves seem to move round, upwards, downwards, or around, according to his own movements.

2nd, Falseness to his own convictions.

Pilate had a conviction that Jesus was innocent. Instead of acting at once on that, he went and parleyed. He argued and debated till the practical force of the conviction was unsettled.

Now let us distinguish: I do not say that a man is never to re-examine a question once settled. A great Christian writer, whose works are very popular, has advised that when a view has once been arrived at as true, it should be as it were laid on the shelf, and never again looked on as an open question: but surely this is false. A young man of twenty-three, with such light as he has, forms his views: is he never to have more light? Is he never to open again the questions which his immature mind has decided on once? Is he never in manhood, with manhood's data and manhood's experience, to modify, or even reverse, what once seemed the very Truth itself? Nay, my brethren—the weak pride of consistency, the cowardice which dares not say I have been wrong all my life, the false anxiety which is fostered to be true to our principles rather than to make sure that our principles are true, all this would leave in

Romanism the man who is born a Romanist. It is not so: the best and bravest have struggled from error into truth: they listened to their honest doubts, and tore up their old beliefs by the very roots.

Distinguish however. A man may unsettle the verdict of his intellect: it is at his peril that he tampers with the convictions of his conscience. Every opinion and view must remain an open question, freely to be tried with fresh light. But there are Eternal Truths of Right and Wrong, such as the plain moralities and instinctive decencies of social life, upon which it is perilous to argue. There are plain cases of immediate duty where it is only safe to act at once.

Now Pilate was false to his *conscience*. His conviction was that Jesus was innocent. It was not a matter of speculation or probability at all, nor a matter in which fresh evidence was even expected, but a case sifted and examined thoroughly. The Pharisees are persecuting a guiltless man. His claims to royalty are not the civil crime which they would make out. Every charge has fallen to the ground. The clear mind of the Roman Procurator saw that, as in sunlight, and he did not try to invalidate that judicial conviction. He tried to get rid of the clear duty which resulted from it. Now it is a habit such as this which creates the temper of scepticism.

I address men of a speculative turn of mind. There is boundless danger in all inquiry which is merely curious. When a man brings a clear and practised intellect to try questions, by the answer to which he

does not mean to rule his conduct, let him not marvel if he feels, as life goes on, a sense of desolation; existence a burden, and all uncertain. It is the law of his human nature which binds him; for truth is for the heart rather than the intellect. If it is not *done* it becomes unreal—as gloomily unreal and as dreamily impalpable as it was to Pilate.

3rd. The third cause of Pilate's scepticism was the taint of the worldly temper of his day. Pilate had been a public man. He knew life: had mixed much with the world's business, and the world's politics: had come across a multiplicity of opinions, and gained a smattering of them all. He knew how many philosophies and religions pretended to an exclusive possession of Truth; and how the pretensions of each were overthrown by another. And his incredulity was but a specimen of the scepticism fashionable in his day. The polished scepticism of a polished, educated Roman, a sagacious man of the world, too much behind the scenes of public life to trust professions of goodness or disinterestedness, or to believe in enthusiasm and a sublime life. And his merciful language, and his desire to save Jesus, was precisely the liberalism current in our day as in his—an utter disbelief in the truths of a world unseen, but at the same time an easy, careless toleration, a half-benevolent, half-indolent unwillingness to molest the poor dreamers who chose to believe in such superstitions.

This is the superficial liberalism which is contracted in public life. Public men contract a rapid way of

discussing and dismissing the deepest questions: never going deep: satisfied with the brilliant flippancy which treats religious beliefs as phases of human delusion, seeing the hollowness of the characters around them, and believing that all is hollow: and yet not without their moments of superstition, as when Pilate was afraid, hearing of a Son of God, and connecting it doubtless with the heathen tales of gods who had walked this earth in visible flesh and blood; which he had laughed at, and which he now for one moment suspected might be true: not without their moments of horrible insecurity, when the question, "What is Truth?" is not a brilliant sarcasm, but a sarcasm on themselves, on human life, on human nature, wrung out of the loneliest and darkest bewilderment that can agonize a human soul.

To such a character Jesus would not explain His Truth. He gave no reply: He held His peace. God's Truth is too sacred to be expounded to superficial worldliness in its transient fit of earnestness.

4th, Lastly, I assign, as a cause of scepticism, that priestly bigotry which forbids inquiry and makes doubt a crime.

The priests of that day had much to answer for. Consider for a moment the state of things. One—of whom *they* only knew that He was a man of unblemished life—came forward to proclaim the Truth. But it was new: they had never heard such views before: they were quite sure *they* had never taught such, nor sanctioned such: and so they settled that the thing was heresy. He had no accredited ordination.

"We know that God spake to Moses: as for this fellow we know not whence He is." Then they proceeded to bind that decision upon others. A man was heard to say, "Why, what evil hath He done?" Small offence enough; but it savoured of a dangerous candour towards a suspected man; and in the priestly estimate, candour is the next step to heresy. "Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost Thou teach us? and they cast him out of the synagogue." And so again with Pilate: they stifled his soul's rising convictions with threats and penalties. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend."

This was what they were always doing: they forbade all inquiry, and made doubt of their decision a crime.

Now, the results of this priestcraft were twofold. The first result was seen in the fanaticism of the people who cried for blood: the second, in the scepticism of Pilate.

And these are the two results which come from all claims to infallibility, and all prohibition of inquiry. They make bigots of the feeble-minded who cannot think: cowardly bigots, who at the bidding of their priests or ministers swell the ferocious cry which forces a government, or a judge, or a bishop, to persecute some opinion which they fear and hate; turning private opinion into civil crime: and they make sceptics of the acute intellects which, like Pilate, see through their fallacies, and, like Pilate, too, dare not publish their misgivings.

And it matters not in what form that claim to infallibility is made: whether in the clear, consistent way in

which Rome asserts it, or whether in the inconsistent way in which churchmen make it for their church, or religious bodies for their favourite opinions: wherever penalties attach to a conscientious conviction, be they the penalties of the rack and flame, or the penalties of being suspected, and avoided, and slandered, and the slur of heresy affixed to the name, till all men count him dangerous lest they too should be put out of the synagogue—and let every man who is engaged in persecuting any opinion ponder it: these two things must follow—you make fanatics, and you make sceptics; believers you cannot make.

Therefore do we stand by the central protest and truth of Protestantism. There is infallibility nowhere on this earth: not in Rome; not in councils or convocations; not in the Church of England; not in priests; not in ourselves. The soul is thrown in the grandeur of a sublime solitariness on God. Woe to the spirit that stifles its convictions, when priests threaten and the mob which they have maddened cries heresy, and insinuates disloyalty: "Thou art not Cæsar's friend."

II. The mode appointed for discovering the reply to the question, "What is Truth?"

Observe—I do not make our second division that which might seem the natural one—what Truth is. I am not about to be guilty of the presumption of answering the question which Jesus did not answer. Some persons hearing the text might think it to be the duty of any man who took it as a text to preach upon,

to lay down what Truth is: and if a minister were so to treat it, he might give you the fragment of Truth which his own poor mind could grasp: and he might call it as the phrase is, *The* Truth, or *The* Gospel: and he might require his hearers to receive it on peril of salvation. And then he would have done as the priests did; and they who lean on other minds would have gone away bigoted: and they who *think* would have smiled, sadly, bitterly, or sarcastically; and gone home to doubt still more, "What *is* truth, and is it to be found?"

No, my brethren; The Truth cannot be compressed into a sermon. The reply to Pilate's question cannot be contained in any verbal form. Think you, that if Christ Himself could have answered that question in a certain number of sentences, He would have spent thirty years of life in witnessing to it? Some men would compress into the limits of one reply, or one discourse, the Truth which it took Christ thirty years to teach, and which He left unfinished for the Spirit to complete.

One word. The Truth is infinite as the firmament above you. In childhood, both seem near and measurable: but with years they grow and grow; and seem further off, and further and grander, and deeper, and vaster, as God Himself; till you smile to remember how you thought you could touch the sky, and blush to recollect the proud and self-sufficient way in which you used to talk of knowing or preaching "The Truth."

And once again: the truth is made up of principles: an inward Life, not any mere formula of words. God's Character: Spiritual worship: the Divine Life in the

Soul. How shall I put that into sentences ten or ten thousand? "The words which I speak unto you, they are Truth, and they are *Life.*" How could Pilate's question be answered except by a Life? The Truth, then, which Pilate wanted—which you want, and I want—is not the boundless verities, but truth of inward life. Truth for me: Truth enough to guide me in this darkling world: enough to teach me how to live and how to die.

Now—the appointed ways to teach this Truth. They are three: Independence—Humbleness—Action.

First, Independence. Let no man start as if independence savoured of presumption. Protestant independence, they tell us, is pride and self-reliance: but in truth it is nothing more than a deep sense of personal responsibility; a determination to trust in God rather than in man to teach: in God and God's light in the soul. You choose a guide among precipices and glaciers: but you walk for yourself: judge his opinion, though more experienced than your own: overrule it if needs be: use your own strength: rely on your own nerves. That is independence.

You select your own physician, deciding upon the respective claims of men, the most ignorant of whom knows more of the matter than you. You prudently hesitate at times to follow the advice of the one you trust most, yet that is only independence without a particle of presumption.

And so precisely in matters of religious Truth. No man cares for your health as you do: therefore you

rely blindly upon none. No man has the keeping of your own soul, or cares for it as you do. For yourself, therefore, you inquire and think, and you refuse to delegate that work to bishop, priest, or church. Call they that presumption? Oh! the man who knows the awful feeling of being alone, and struggling for Truth as for life and death—he knows the difference between independence and presumption.

Second, Humbleness. There is no infallibility in man—if so, none in us. *We* may err: that one thought is enough to keep a man humble.

There are two kinds of temper contrary to this spirit. The first is a disputing, captious temper. Disagreement is refreshing when two men lovingly desire to compare their views to find out the truth. Controversy is wretched when it is an attempt to prove one another wrong. Therefore Christ would not *argue* with Pilate. Religious controversy does only harm. It destroys the humble inquiry after truth: it throws all the energies into an attempt to prove ourselves right.—The next temper contrary is a hopeless spirit. Pilate's question breathed of hopelessness. He felt that Jesus was unjustly condemned, but he thought Him in views as hopelessly wrong as the rest—all wrong. What was truth? Who knew anything about it? He spoke too bitterly—too hopelessly—too disappointedly to get an answer. In that despairing spirit no man gets at truth: "*The meek* will He guide in judgment. . . ."

Lastly, Action. This was Christ's rule—"If any man will *do* His will: . . ." A blessed rule: a plain

and simple rule. Here we are in a world of mystery, where all is difficult, and very much dark—where a hundred jarring creeds declare themselves to be The Truth, and all are plausible. How shall a man decide? Let him *do* the right that lies before him: much is uncertain—some things at least are clear. Whatever else may be wrong, it *must* be right to be pure—to be just and tender, and merciful and honest. It *must* be right to love, and to deny one's-self. Let him do the Will, and he shall know. Observe—men begin the other way. They say, if I could but believe, then I would make my life true. If I could but be sure what is truth, then I would set to work to live in earnest. No—God says, Act—make the life true, and then you will be able to believe. Live in earnest, and you will know the answer to "What is Truth?"

Infer the blessedness of belief. Young men are prone to consider scepticism a proof of strong-mindedness—a something to be proud of. Let Pilate be a specimen—and a wretched one he is. He had clear-mindedness enough to be dissatisfied with all the views he knew: enough to see through and scorn the squabbles and superstitions of priests and bigots. All well: if from doubt of falsehood he had gone on to a belief in a higher truth. But doubt, when it left him doubting—why—the noblest opportunity man ever had—that of saving the Saviour, he missed: he became a thing for the people to despise, and after ages to pity. And that is scepticism. Call you that a manly thing?

To believe is to be happy: to doubt is to be wretched.

But I will not urge that. Seventy years—and the most fevered brain will be still enough. We will not say much of the wretchedness of doubt. To believe is to be *strong*. Doubt cramps energy. Belief is power: only so far as a man believes strongly, mightily, can he act cheerfully, or do anything that is worth the doing.

I speak to those who have learned to hold cheap the threats wherewith priests and people would terrify into acquiescence—to those who are beyond the appeal of fear, and can only yield, if at all, to higher motives. Young men! the only manly thing, the only strong thing, is Faith. It is not so far as a man doubts, but so far as he believes, that he can achieve or perfect anything. "All things are possible to *him that believeth*."

XXI.

(Preached on the first day of Public Mourning for the Queen Dowager, 1849.)

THE ISRAELITE'S GRAVE IN A FOREIGN LAND.*

GEN. i. 24—26.—"And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt."

THERE is a moment when a man's life is re-lived on earth. It is in that hour in which the coffin lid is shut

* *This Sermon was formerly published by the Author in a separate form, and the following Preface to that publication explains so well the circumstances under which all the other Sermons have been preserved, that it has been thought best to reprint the preface here.*

"For the publication of the common-place observations contained in the following pages, the common-place excuse may, perhaps, suffice, that printing was the simplest way of multiplying copies for a few friends who desired them. Perhaps, too, the uncommonness of the occasion may justify the writer in giving to an ephemeral discourse an existence somewhat less transient than the minutes spent in listening to it.

"The Sermon is published as nearly as possible as it was spoken.

down, just before the funeral, when earth has seen the last of him for ever. Then the whole life is, as it were, lived over again in the conversation which turns upon the memory of the departed. The history of threescore years and ten is soon recapitulated: not, of course, the innumerable incidents and acts which they contained, but the central governing principle of the whole. Feverish curiosity sometimes spends itself upon the last hours; and a few correct sentences, implying faith after the orthodox phraseology, would convey to some greater hope than a whole life breathing the Spirit of Christ, separate from such sentences. But it is not thus the Bible speaks. It tells us very little of the closing scene, but a great deal of the general tenor of a life. In truth, the closing scene is worth very little. The felon, who, up to the last fortnight, has shown his impenitence by the plea of not guilty, in the short compass of that fortnight makes a confession, as a matter of course exhibits the externals of penitence, and

It was written out concisely for a friend on the day of its delivery, with no intention of publication. Afterwards, it seemed better to leave it in that state, with only a few corrections, and the addition of a few sentences, than to attempt to re-write it after an interval too great to recal what had been said. This will account for the abruptness and want of finish which pervades the composition.

"The writer takes this opportunity of disowning certain sermons which have been published in his name. They would not have been worth notice, had not the innumerable blunders of thought and expression which they contain been read and accepted by several as his. For this reason he feels it due to himself to state that they are published without his sanction, and against his request, and that he is not responsible for either the language or the ideas."

receives the last Supper. But it would be credulity, indeed, to be easily persuaded that the eternal state of such a one is affected by it. A life of holiness sometimes mysteriously terminates in darkness; but it is not the bitterest cries of forsakenness—so often the result of physical exhaustion—nor even blank despair, that shall shake our deep conviction that he whose faith shone brightly through life, is now safe in the Everlasting arms. The dying scene is worth little—little, at least, to us—except so far as it is in harmony with the rest of life.

It is for this reason that the public estimate, pronounced upon the departed, is generally a fair criterion of worth. There are, of course, exceptional cases—cases in which the sphere of action has been too limited for the fair development of the character, and nothing but the light of the Judgment day can reveal it in its true aspect—cases in which party spirit has defaced a name; and years are wanted to wash away the mask of false colour which has concealed the genuine features—cases in which the champion of truth expires amidst the execrations of his contemporaries, and after-ages build his sepulchre. These, however, are exceptions. For the most part, when all is over, general opinion is not far from truth. Misrepresentation and envy have no provocatives left them. What the departed was is tolerably well-known in the circle in which he moved. The epitaph may be falsified by the partiality of relations; but the broad judgment of society reverses that,

rectifies it, and pronounces with perhaps a rude, but on the whole, fair approximation to the truth.

These remarks apply to the history of the man whose final scene is recorded in the text. The verdict of the Egyptian world was worth much. Joseph had gone to Egypt, some years before, a foreigner; had lived there in obscurity; had been exposed to calumny; by his quiet, consistent goodness, had risen, step by step, first to respect, then to trust, command, and veneration; was embalmed after death in the affections, as well as with the burial rights, of the Egyptians; and his honoured from reposed at last amidst the burial place of the Pharaohs.

In this respect the text branches into a twofold division. The life of Joseph; and the death which was in accordance with that life.

1. The history of Joseph, as of every man, has two sides—its outward circumstances and its inner life.

The outward circumstances were chequered with misfortune. Severed from his home in very early years, sold into slavery, cast into prison—at first, grief seemed to have marked him for her own. And this is human life. Part of its lot is misery. There are two inadequate ways of accounting for this mystery of sorrow. One, originating in a zeal for God's justice, represents it as invariably the chastisement of sin, or at the least, as correction for fault. But, plainly, it is not always such. Joseph's griefs were the consequences, not of fault, but of rectitude. The integrity which, on some unknown occasion, made it his duty to carry his

brethren's "evil report" to their father, was the occasion of his slavery. The purity of his life was the cause of his imprisonment. Fault is only a part of the history of this great matter of sorrow. Another theory, created by zeal for God's love, represents sorrow as the exception, and happiness as the rule of life. We are made for enjoyment, it is said, and on the whole there is more enjoyment than wretchedness. The common idea of Love being that which identifies it with a simple wish to confer happiness, no wonder that a feeble attempt is made to vindicate God, by a reduction of the apparent amount of pain. Unquestionably, however, love is very different from a desire to shield from pain. Eternal Love gives to painlessness a very subordinate place in comparison of excellence of character. It does not hesitate to secure man's spiritual dignity at the expense of the sacrifice of his well-being. The solution will not do. Let us look the truth in the face. You cannot hide it from yourself. "Man is born to sorrow as the sparks fly upwards." Sorrow is not an accident, occurring now and then; it is the very woof which is woven into the warp of life. God has created the nerves to agonize, and the heart to bleed; and before a man dies, almost every nerve has thrilled with pain, and every affection has been wounded. The account of life which represents it as probation is inadequate: so is that which regards it chiefly as a system of rewards and punishments. The truest account of this mysterious existence seems to be that it is intended for the development of the soul's life, for which sorrow is indispensable.

Every son of man who would attain the true end of his being, must be baptized with fire. It is the law of our humanity, as that of Christ, that we must be perfected through suffering. And he who has not discerned the Divine Sacredness of Sorrow, and the profound meaning which is concealed in pain, has yet to learn what life is. The Cross, manifested as the Necessity of the Highest Life, alone interprets it.

2. Besides this, obloquy was part of Joseph's portion. His brethren, even his father, counted him a vain dreamer, full of proud imaginings. He languished long in a dungeon with a stain upon his character. He was subjected to almost all the bitterness which changes the milk of kindly feelings into gall: to Potiphar's fickleness, to slander, to fraternal envy, to the ingratitude of friendship in the neglect of the chief butler who left his prison, and straightway forgot his benefactor. Out of all which a simple lesson arises, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils." Yet that may be over-stated. Nothing chills the heart like universal distrust. Nothing freezes the genial current of the soul so much as doubts of human nature. Human goodness is no dream. Surely we have met unselfishness, and love, and honour among men. Surely we have seen, and not in dreams, pure benevolence beaming from human countenances. Surely we have met with integrity that the world's wealth could not bribe; and attachment which might bear the test of any sacrifice. It is not so much the depravity as the frailty of men, that makes it impossible to count on them. Was it not excusable

in Jacob, and even natural, if he attributed to vanity his son's relation of the dream in which the sun, and the moon, and the eleven stars, bowed down before him? Was it not excusable if Potiphar distrusted his tried servant's word, when his guilt appeared so indisputably substantiated? Was not even the chief butler's forgetfulness intelligible, when you remember his absorbing interest in his own danger, and the multiplied duties of his office? The world is not to be too severely blamed, if it misrepresents us. It is hard to reach the truth: very hard to sift a slander. Men who believe such rumours, especially in courtly life, may be ignorant, hasty, imperfect, but are not necessarily treacherous. Yet, even while you keep this in mind, that the heart may not be soured, remember, your dearest friend may fail you in the crisis; a truth of experience was wrapped up in the old fable, and the thing you have fostered in your bosom may wound you to the quick; the one you have trusted may become your Accuser, and throw his own blame with dastard meanness upon you. That was the experience of Joseph. Was not that His fate who trusted Judas? There is One, and but One, whose Love is as a rock, which will not fail you when you cling. It is a fearful, solitary feeling, that lonely truth of life; yet not without a certain strength and grandeur in it. The life that is the deepest and the truest will feel most vividly both its desolation and its majesty. We live and die alone. God and our own souls—we fall back upon them at last. "Behold, the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye

shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me."

3. Success, besides, marked the career of Joseph. Let us not take half views of men and things. The woof of life is dark; that we granted: but it is shot through a web of brightness. Accordingly, in Joseph's case, even in his worst days, you find a kind of balance, to be weighed against his sorrows. The doctrine of compensation is found through all. Amidst the schemings of his brothers' envy he had his father's love. In his slavery he had some recompense in feeling that he was gradually winning his master's confidence. In his dungeon he possessed the consciousness of innocence, and the grateful respect of his fellow-prisoners. In that beautiful hymn which some of you read last Sunday,* you may remember that a parallel is drawn between human life and the aspects of the weather. The morning rainbow, glittering among the dangerous vapours of the west, predicts that the day will not unclouded pass away. The evening rainbow declares that the storms are past, and that serene weather is setting in. Such is the life of all whom God disciplines. The morning or the evening brightness is the portion of a life, the rest of which is storm. Rarely are the manful struggles of principle in the first years of life suffered to be in vain. Joseph saw the early clouds which darkened the morning of his existence, pass away; and the rainbow of heavenly peace arched over the calmness of his later

* Keble's Christian Year. Twenty-fifth Sunday after Trinity.

years. "The Lord was with Joseph, and he was a prosperous man." And it is for this special purpose it is written, "And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation; the children also of Machir, the son of Manasseh, were brought up upon Joseph's knees." Long life, an honoured old age, a quiet grave; these were the blessings reckoned desirable in Jewish modes of thought: and they are mentioned as evidences of Joseph's happiness.

And this, too, is Life. The sorrows of the past stand out most vividly in our recollections: because they are the keenest of our sensations. At the end of a long existence we should probably describe it thus, "Few and evil have the days of the years of thy servant been." But the innumerable infinitesimals of happiness that from moment to moment made life sweet and pleasant are forgotten; and very richly has our Father mixed the materials of these with the homeliest actions and domesticities of existence. See two men meeting together in the streets; mere acquaintances. They will not be five minutes together before a smile will overspread their countenances, or a merry laugh ring of, at the lowest, amusement. This has God done. God created the smile and the laugh, as well as the sigh and the tear. The aspect of this life is stern; very stern. It is a very superficial account of it which slurs over its grave mystery, and refuses to hear its low, deep undertone of anguish. But there is enough, from hour to hour, of bright, sunny happiness, to remind us that its Creator's highest name is Love.

Now turn to the spirit of Joseph's inner life. First of all, that life was forgiveness. You cannot but have remarked that, conversant as his experience was with human treachery, no expressions of bitterness escape from him. No sentimental wailing over the cruelty of relations, the falseness of friendship, or the ingratitude of the world. No rancorous outburst of misanthropy: no sarcastic scepticism of man's integrity or woman's honour. He meets all bravely, with calm, meek, and dignified forbearance. If ever man had cause for such doubts, he had; yet his heart was never soured. At last, after his father's death, his brothers, apprehending his resentful recollections of their early cruelty, come to deprecate his revenge. Very touching is his reply. "Fear not: for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me: but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones."

This is the Christian spirit before the Christian times. Christ was in Joseph's heart, though not definitely in Joseph's creed. The Eternal Word whispered in the souls of men before it spoke articulately aloud in the Incarnation. It was the Divine Thought before it became the Divine Expression.* It was the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, before It blazed into the Day-spring from on high which visited us. The Mind of Christ, the Spirit of the years yet future, blended itself with life before He came; for

* Λόγος ἐνδιάθετος—προφορικὸς.

His words were the Eternal Verities of our Humanity In all ages Love is the truth of life. Men cannot injure us except so far as they exasperate us to forget ourselves. No man is really dishonoured except by his own act. Calumny, injustice, ingratitude—the only harm these can do us is by making us bitter or rancorous, or gloomy: by shutting our hearts, or souring our affections. We rob them of their power if they only leave us more sweet and forgiving than before. And this is the only true victory. We win by love. Love transmutes all curses, and forces them to rain down in blessings. Out of the jealousy of his brothers Joseph extracted the spirit of forgiveness. Out of Potiphar's weak injustice, and out of the machinations of disappointed Passion, he created an opportunity of learning meekness. Our enemies become unconsciously our best friends, when their slanders deepen in us heavenlier graces. Let them do their worst; they only give us the God-like victory of forgiving them.

2. Distinguished from the outward circumstances, we find simplicity of character: partly in the willingness to acknowledge his shepherd father in Egypt, where the pastoral life was an abomination; partly in that incidental notice which we have of the feast at which he entertained his brethren, where the Egyptians sat at a table by themselves, and Joseph by himself. So that, elevated as he was, his heart remained Hebrew still. He had contracted a splendid alliance, by marrying into one of the noblest families in Egypt, that of Potipherah the priest of On. And yet he had not

forgotten his country, nor sought to be naturalized there. His heart was in that far land where he had fed his father's flocks, in his simple, genial boyhood. The divining cup of Egyptian silver was on his table; but he remembered the days when the only splendour he knew was that coat of many colours which was made for him by his father. He bore a simple, unsophisticated heart amidst the pomp of an Egyptian court.

There is a great mistake made on the subject of simplicity. There is one simplicity of circumstances: another simplicity of heart. These two must not be confounded. It is common to talk of the humble poor man, and the proud rich man. Let not these ideas be inseparably blended together. There is many a man who sits down to a meal of bread and milk on a wooden table, whose heart is as proud as the proudest whose birth is royal. There is many a one whose voice is heard in the public meeting, loudly descanting on regal tyranny and aristocratic insolence, who in his own narrow circle is as much a tyrant as any oppressor who ever disgraced the throne. And there is many a man who sits down to daily pomp, to whom gold and silver are but as brass and tin, and who bears in the midst of it all a meek, simple spirit, and a "heart refrained as a weaned child." Many a man who lives surrounded with homage, and hearing the applause and flattery of men perpetually, on whose heart these things fall flat and dead, without raising one single emotion of fluttered vanity.

The world cannot understand this. They cannot

believe that Joseph can be humble, while he is conscious of such elevation above the crowd of men, not even dreaming of it. They cannot understand how carelessly these outsides of life can be worn, and how they fall off like the unregarded and habitual dress of daily life. They cannot know how the spirit of the Cross can crucify the world, make grandeur painful, and calm the soul with a vision of the Eternal Beauty. They cannot dream how His life and death, once felt as the grandest, write mockery on all else, and fill the soul with an ambition which is above the world. It is not the unjewelled finger: nor the affectation of an almost quakerish simplicity of attire: nor the pedestrian mode of travelling: nor the scanty meal, that constitute humility. It is that simple, inner life of real greatness, which is indifferent to magnificence, and surrounded by it all, lives far away in the distant country of a Father's Home, with the Cross borne silently and self-sacrificingly in the heart of hearts.

3. One characteristic of Joseph's inner life remains—benevolence. It was manifested in the generosity with which he entertained his brethren, and in the discriminating tenderness with which he provided his best beloved brother's feast with extraordinary delicacies. These were traits of thoughtfulness. But farther still. The prophetic insight of Joseph enabled him to foresee the approach of famine. He took measures accordingly; and when the famine came, the royal storehouses were opened, and every man in Egypt owed his life to the benevolent providence of the Hebrew stranger. It was

productive of a great social revolution. It brought, by degrees, all the land of Egypt into the power of the Crown, so that a kind of feudal system was established, every man holding in direct tenancy from the Crown. Hence the nation became compacted into a new unity, and power was concentrated in the hands of government, partly by the pecuniary revenue thus added, and partly by the lustre of goodness which Joseph had thrown round the royal acts. For acts like these are the real bulwarks of a throne. One such man as Joseph does more to strengthen the Crown than all the speculations solemn or trifling, which were ever written on the "Divine right of kings." There *is* a right divine which requires no elaborate theory to make it felt.

II. The death of Joseph was in accordance with his life.

1. The funeral was a homage paid to goodness. Little is said in the text of Joseph's funeral. To know what it was, we must turn to the earlier part of the chapter, where that of Jacob is mentioned. A mourning of seventy days; a funeral whose imposing greatness astonished the Canaanites. They said, "This is a grievous mourning to the Egyptians." Seventy days were the time, or nearly so, fixed by custom for a royal funeral; and Jacob was so honoured, not for his own sake, but because he was Joseph's father. We cannot suppose that Joseph's own obsequies were on a scale less grand.

Now, weigh what is implied in this. This was not

the homage paid to talent, nor to wealth, nor to birth. Joseph was a foreign slave, raised to eminence by the simple power of goodness. Every man in Egypt felt, at his death, that he had lost a friend. There were thousands whose tears would fall when they recounted the preservation of lives dear to them in the years of famine, and felt that they owed those lives to Joseph. Grateful Egypt mourned the Good Foreigner; and, for once, the honours of this world were given to the graces of another.

2. We collect from this, besides, a hint of the resurrection of the body. The Egyptian mode of sepulture was embalming; and the Hebrews, too, attached much importance to the body after death. Joseph commanded his countrymen to preserve his bones to take away with them. In this we detect that unmistakeable human craving, not only for immortality, but immortality associated with a form. No doubt, the Egyptian feeling was carried out absurdly. They tried to redeem from the worm the very aspect that had been worn, the very features they had loved; and there was a kind of feeling, that while that mummy lasted, the man had not yet perished from earth. They expected that, in process of years, it would again be animated by its spirit.

Now, Christianity does not disappoint, but rather meets, that feeling. It grants all that the materialist, and all that the spiritualist, have a right to ask. It grants to the materialist, by the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, that future life shall be associated

with a material form. Leaving untouched all the questions which may be raised about the identity of the atoms that have been buried, it simply pronounces that the spirit shall have a body. It grants to the spiritualist all he ought to wish, that the spirit shall be free from evil. For it is a mistake of ultra-spiritualism, to connect degradation with the thought of a risen body; or to suppose that a mind, unbound by the limitations of space, is a more spiritual idea of resurrection than the other. The opposite to spirituality is not materialism, but sin. The form of matter does not degrade. For what is this world itself but the form of Deity, whereby the manifoldness of His mind and Beauty manifests, and wherein it clothes itself? It is idle to say that spirit can exist apart from form. We do not know that it can. Perhaps even the Eternal Himself is more closely bound to His works than our philosophical systems have conceived. Perhaps matter is only a mode of thought. At all events, all that we know or can know of mind, exists in union with form. The resurrection of the body is the Christian verity, which meets and satisfies those cravings of the ancient Egyptian mind, that expressed themselves in the process of embalming, and the religious reverence felt for the very bones of the departed by the Hebrews.

Finally, in the last Will and Testament of Joseph, we find faith. He commanded his brethren, and through them, his nation, to carry his bones with them when they migrated to Canaan. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, that is reckoned an evidence of faith. "By

faith Joseph gave commandment concerning his bones." How did he know that his people would ever quit Egypt? We reply, by faith. Not faith in a written word, for Joseph had no Bible; rather, faith in that conviction of his own heart, which is itself the substantial evidence of faith. For religious faith ever dreams of something higher, more beautiful, more perfect, than the state of things with which it feels itself surrounded, Ever, a day future lies before it: the evidence for which is its own hope. Abraham, by that creative faith, saw the day of Christ, and was glad. Joseph saw his family in prosperity, even in affluence; but he felt that this was not their rest. A higher life than that of affluence —a nobler destiny than that of stagnant rest, there must be for them in the future; else all the anticipations of a purer earth, and a holier world, which imagination bodied forth within his soul, were empty dreams, not the intuitions of God's Spirit. It was this Idea of perfection, which was "the substance of things hoped for," that carried him far beyond the period of his own death, and made him feel himself a partaker of his nation's blessed future.

And that is the evidence of immortality. When the coffin is lowered into the grave, and the dull, heavy sound of earth falling on it is heard, there are some to whom that sound seems but an echo of their worst anticipations; seems but to reverberate the idea of decay for ever, in the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." There are others, to whom it sounds pregnant with the expectations of immortality,

the "sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life." The difference between these two feelings is measured by the difference of lives. They whose life is low and earthly, how can they believe in aught beyond the grave, when nothing of that life which is eternal has yet stirred within them? They who have lived as Joseph lived, just in proportion to their purity and their unselfishness, must believe it. They cannot but believe it. The eternal existence is already pulsing in their veins; the life of trust and high hope, and sublime longings after perfection, with which the decay of the frame has nothing at all to do. That is gone—yes—but it was not that life in which they lived, and when it finished, what had that ruin to do with the destruction of the Immortal?

For what is our proof of immortality? Not the analogies of nature; the resurrection of nature from a winter grave, or the emancipation of the butterfly. Not even the testimony to the fact of risen dead; for who does not know how shadowy and unsubstantial these intellectual proofs become in unspiritual frames of mind? No, the life of the spirit is the evidence. Heaven begun is the living proof that makes the heaven to come credible. "Christ in you *is* the hope of glory." It is the eagle eye of faith which penetrates the grave, and sees far into the tranquil things of death. He alone can believe in immortality, who feels the resurrection in him already.

There is a special application to be made of this subject to our hearts. It is not often that the pulpit

can be used for a funeral eulogium. Where Christ is to be exalted in solitary pre-eminence, it is but rarely that the praise of man may be heard. Rank, Royalty itself could not command from the lips of a minister of the King of kings one syllable of adulatory, undeserved, or unfelt homage. But there are cases in which to loftiness of birth is added dignity of character; and then we gladly relax the rule, to pay a willing tribute to the majesty of Goodness. There is one to whom your thoughts must have reverted often during the history which we have been going through, suggesting a parallel, all the more delicately felt from the absence of direct allusion. That royal Lady, for whose loss the marvellous uniformity of the unbroken funeral hue which pervades this congregation, tells eloquently of general mourning, came to this land a few years ago, like Joseph, a foreigner. Like Joseph, the earlier years of her sojourn were spent in comparative obscurity. Like Joseph, she had her share of calumny, though in a different form. There are many here who can remember that in that year when our political feuds had attained the acme of rancour, the irreverent lip of party Slander dared to breathe its rank venom upon the name of one of the gentlest that ever adorned a throne. There are some who know how that unpopularity was met: with meekness—with Christian forgiveness—with quiet dignity—with that composure which is the highest result and evidence of strength. Like Joseph, she passed through the temptations of a court with unsullied spotlessness — like Joseph, the domestic and social

relationships were sustained with beautiful fidelity—like Joseph, she lived down opposition, outlived calumny—like Joseph, she used the noble income entrusted to her, in acts of almost unexampled munificence—like Joseph, her life was chequered with sorrow, and when the clouds of earlier difficulties had cleared away, the rainbow sign of peace, even in the midst of broken health, spanned the calmness of her evening years—like Joseph, she will have a regal burial, and her ashes will repose with the dust of England's princes, amidst the mourning of the nation in which she found a home.

The homage which is given to her is not the homage yielded to rank, or wealth, or genius. There will be silver on her coffin, and magnificence in the pageantry which attends her to the grave;* but it is not in these that the glory of her funeral lies. These were the privileges of the most profligate of her ancestors as well as her. These are the world's rewards for those whom she delights to honour. There will be something in her funeral, beside which these things are mean. There is a grandeur in a nation's tears; and they will be shed in unfeigned reverence over the remains of all that was most queenly, and all that was most womanly. No political fervour mixes with her obsequies. She stood indentified with no party politics. No peculiar religious party mourns its patroness. Of all our jarring religious

* This anticipation has not been realized. In one of the most touching and unaffected documents that ever went right home to English hearts, the Queen of a British Sovereign requested to be borne to the grave as the wife of a sailor.

sects, in the Church, and out of it, not one dares to claim her as its own. Her spirit soared above these things. It is known that she scarcely recognised them. All was lost in the sublimer name of Christian. It is a *Christian* who has passed from this earth away, to take her place in the general Assembly and Church of the first born: to stand before God, the Judge of all, among the spirits of the just made perfect.

One word more. Honouring the Queen, profoundly reverencing the Woman, let not contemplation stop there. Do not bury thought in the human and finite. Mildly as her lustre shone on earth, remember it was but one feeble ray of the Light that is Uncreated. All that she had she received. If we honour her, it is to adore Him who made her what she was. Of His fulness she had received, and grace for grace. What she was she became through adoring faith in Christ. It is an elevating thing to gaze on human excellence, because through it the Highest becomes conceivable. It is a spirit-stirring thing to see saintly Goodness asserting its celestial origin by turning pale the lustre of the highest earthly rank. For in this universal mourning our noble country has not bowed the knee in reverence to the majesty which is of time. Every heart in England has felt that the Sovereign was merged in the servant of Christ. "The King's daughter was all glorious within." Hers was *Christian* goodness. Her eyes had beheld the King in His Beauty, and therefore her life was beautiful, and feminine, and meek, and simple. It was all derived beauty. She had robed herself in Christ.

"Reflecting back, as from a burnished mirror, the glory of the Lord, she was changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."*

* 2 Cor. iii. 18. This appears to be the true force and rendering of the metaphor.

Subjoined are the directions given by her late Majesty for her own funeral. The reader will be glad to have them preserved in a form less inconvenient than the columns of a newspaper. Should he be one who feels it a relief to miss, for once, the worn-out conventionalisms of religious expression, and come in contact with something fresh and living, he will find more in these quiet lines than in ten sermons; more to make a very happy tear start; more of the simplicity and the beauty of the life in God; more to cool the feverishness of his heart, and still its worldliness into silence; more of that deep rest into which the meek and humble enter; more that will make him long to be simple and inartificial, and real, as Christ was, desiring only, in life and death, and judgment, to be found in HIM.

[COPY.]

"I die in all humility, knowing well that we are all alike before the Throne of God, and request, therefore, that my mortal remains be conveyed to the grave without any pomp or state. They are to be moved to St. George's Chapel, Windsor, where I request to have as private and quiet a funeral as possible.

"I particularly desire not to be laid out in state, and the funeral to take place by daylight, no procession, the coffin to be carried by sailors to the chapel.

"All those of my friends and relations, to a limited number, who wish to attend, may do so. My nephew, Prince Edward of Saxe Weimar, Lords Howe and Denbigh, the Hon. William Ashley, Mr. Wood, Sir Andrew Barnard, and Sir D. Davis, with my dressers, and those of my ladies who may wish to attend.

"I die in peace, and wish to be carried to the tomb in peace, and free from the vanities and the pomp of this world.

"I request not to be dissected, nor embalmed; and desire to give as little trouble as possible.

(Signed) "ADELAIDE R.

"November, 1849."

THE END.

London: Printed by Smith, Elder and Co., Little Green Arbour Court.

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Government of Maharashtra
on 30 January, 2020